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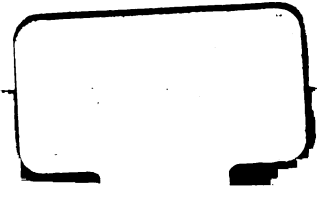

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE

OF

GEORGE FREDERICK COOKE,

ESQUIRE,

LATE OF THE THEATRE ROYAL,

COVENT GARDEN.

BY WILLIAM DUNLAP.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

COMPOSED PRINCIPALLY FROM JOURNALS AND OTHER AUTHENTIC DOCUMENTS, LEFT BY MR. COOKE; AND THE PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE WRITER.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY D. LONGWORTH,

At the Shakspeare Gallery, No. 11, Park, near the Theatre.

1813.

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"*Memoirs of the Life of George Frederick Cooke, Esquire, late of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden. By William Dunlap. In two volumes. Vol. I. Composed principally from journals and other authentic documents, left by Mr. Cooke; and the personal knowledge of the writer.*"

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned:" and also to an act entitled "an act supplementary to an act, entitled an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

THERON RUDD, *Clerk of the District of New-York.*

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PREFACE.

THE following work was undertaken by me with reluctance, but has increased upon me in interest, very far beyond what I could have conceived at the commencement.

In the month of May, 1811, Mr. Cooke asked me, rather sportively, to be his Biographer, and I, in the same spirit, promised. He then said, that he had several manuscript journals, which he would put into my hands; but as nothing further passed, and the subject was not recurred to, I thought no more of it.

After his death, which happened during a visit I was making to New-Jersey, the business was pressed upon me, and three manuscripts put into my hands. His "chronicle," or a retrospect of his theatrical life, including the first dramatic impressions made upon his mind, with their growth and consequences, was the most important of the three. This work is brought up to 1807. Accompanying it, were two books of diary, kept at different

periods, after his coming to London; without connexion, and at first view, not very intelligible, or interesting. These were the materials upon which I was to build. I knew, however, that I could obtain every information, relative to his engagement for this country, and the subsequent events of his life; and that I possessed a fund of knowledge, derived from my connexion with the New-York theatre, and my intercourse for many months with the subject of the work.

Under these circumstances, I undertook my labour, with the determination to exhibit a faithful picture of this extraordinary man, the events of whose varied life cannot but prove an impressive lesson to every reader. The man of genius will see that he must not rely upon genius alone; and the man who is conscious of mediocrity, will be taught that he must keep a strict watch over his conduct, when he sees, that even the most brilliant talent, cannot avail to produce usefulness or happiness, without virtue and prudence.

If I have succeeded in portraying the image formed in my mind, by the knowledge I possess of Mr. Cooke, I have rendered ser-

vice to the cause of morality, and consequently promoted human happiness.

Actors, and dramatic writers, as connected with the subject of my book, necessarily form a part of it. I have given Mr. Cooke's opinions upon them, as I found those opinions: my own, according to the extent and accuracy of my critical judgment.

An actor, as a subject of biography, is not important because he is an actor, but because he is a man who has been placed in situations interesting to his fellow men; and because his conduct, through an eventful life, if faithfully related, excites attention, interests the feelings, and strikingly indicates to others, the path they should pursue for the attainment of the world's, and their own approbation. Much dramatic biography is censurable, as frivolous, or worthless, or hurtful to the reader; but there are respectable and valuable works of the kind, which, though not perfect, add to the mass of innocent amusement, and useful information. In this last class, I would place, Davis's and Murphy's lives of Garrick, and Kirkman's life of Macklin. I hope the life of Cooke will at least rank as high, in

a moral point of view; it must be my fault, if, from the character of the subject, it does not rank higher, as a work of entertainment.

After commencing my work, I found several other manuscripts of Mr. Cooke's writing, of an earlier date than those I possessed, and of a more energetic and interesting character.

These, with his books, and the parts from which he studied, marked by him in the hour of application, formed a rich mass, not only for the ornament, but for the more essential purpose of strengthening my fabric, and rendering it permanently useful.

By publishing my work both in England* and America, I present to the many thousands, who have received delight from witnessing Mr. Cooke's unrivalled talents, a mass of facts, which could not be given to them by any other person; and I have presumed that there is, throughout Great-Britain, Ireland, and the United States, much curiosity respecting a man so eccentric in his conduct, and so eminent in his profession. The closing scenes

* Arrangements have been made to publish the work in London and New-York at the *same time*.

of such a man's life, are like the catastrophe of a drama, more interesting and impressive than the preceding acts. These scenes have come immediately under my observation, and the description of them is more peculiarly the gift which I could, alone, make to the public.

What value will be set upon it, is yet to be determined; I doubt not that it will be a fair one. When the public forms an unbiassed decision on the merits of a literary work, it is seldom, if ever, erroneous.

WILLIAM DUNLAP.

New-York, February 10th, 1813.

CHAP. I.

Cooke's birth—Family—School-town, at Berwick upon Tweed—Impressions made on him by plays—Iffland—Cooke studies Horatio in the Fair Penitent—Acts young Meadows—Horatio in Hamlet—Stratagems to elude the vigilance of door-keepers—Is bound apprentice to a printer—Performs Zanga in the Revenge—Its unhappy catastrophe.

GEORGE FREDERICK COOKE was born in Westminster, on Saturday, the 17th of April, 1756. Most of his biographers in the periodical publications of England, speak of him as an Irishman, though some make Berwick the place of his birth; and the Cabinet, for October, 1807, says he was born in the barracks of Dublin, where his father was a subaltern in one of the regiments that composed the garrison.

He informed me, that the place of his birth was Westminster; remarking at the same time, that he was generally supposed

to be an Hibernian. His father was, as he expressed it, a dashing officer, and left his widow, Cooke's mother, in straitened circumstances when he was very young. This lady's name was Renton; she was a daughter of the Laird of Renton; whose estate was at, or near, Lamberton. Soon after the death of her husband, Mrs. Cooke went to reside at Berwick upon Tweed, taking our hero with her. It was at this place that George Frederick received a school education, and those early impressions, which gave the form and character to his future transactions in life.

"The first play I ever read," says he, in a manuscript memoir now before me, which he calls 'The Chronicle,' "was Venice Preserved. I also remember, that from some prints I had seen of theatrical characters, particularly one of the late Mr. Henry Woodward in Mercutio, and from the representation of a puppet show, I formed my first, strange and incoherent idea of a stage and theatrical representations. The first play I ever saw acted, was "the Provok'd Husband, or a Journey to London," by a part of the Edinburgh company, in the town hall at Berwick upon Tweed, where I was then at school.

This must have been about the year 1766 or 1767."

Few of my readers but recollect, and generally with pleasure, the impression made upon them by the first representation of a play. So delightful is this kind of exhibition to the young mind, that most people remember the first gratification of this nature, as an epoch in the history of their existence. The vividness of the images, and the durability of the effect, must vary according to the circumstances attending the spectacle, and the character of the child or youth upon whom the impression is made. On the mind of Garrick or Cooke, how great, how lasting must have been the effect of the first blaze of that powerful combination, which at one view, presents the united force of painting, architecture, music, and poetry!

Iffland, one of the greatest of the German actors, and most successful of their dramatic writers, gives, in his theatrical life, the best description of such an impression upon such a mind, that has ever fallen into my hands; and when he speaks of the delight he experienced, seated for the first time among the gay and well-dressed audience, gazing at the lights, and the magnificently

painted drop-curtain; of the bewitching effect on his senses, when this curtain unexpectedly vanished, and he saw the scenery and the performers, I cannot but think it must be a just picture of the sensations of Garrick or of Cooke.

Our hero goes on to say, that "the late Mr. James Aickin, of the Theatre Royal, Drury lane, was the lord Townly, and Mr. and Mrs. Didier were the Count Basset and Miss. Jenny. They are still both living, (1807.) The former has retired from the stage some years, and the latter belongs still, or did last year, to the Theatre Royal, Bath, where she has long been a distinguished favourite. I remember in my occasional visits to Bath and Bristol, having some conversation with Mrs. Didier upon this subject. The farce was the Lying Valet; Sharp, by Mr. Didier."

Every person concerned in the exhibitions of that night, was interesting to him; and the impression then made was indelible. He says that from that time, plays and playing were never absent from his thoughts.

His mother was at this period no more, and he lived with two aunts, her sisters, who resided at Berwick, or in its neighbourhood, and who sent him to school. Play-books

made no part of their library, but the mind of their nephew was too strongly bent on that species of reading, to be discouraged by difficulties; plays were procured from every quarter, and eagerly perused, too much to the exclusion of other studies.

The first part he ever studied for the purpose of representation, was Horatio in the Fair Penitent. A character which, in after life, he frequently played, and which in his best days, must have been a forceful and manly picture of frank, soldierly virtue; yet when he last attempted this character, the first impressed on the tablets of his memory, and that in the hey-day of his passion for the stage, he was so imperfect in the words, as to stop one of the principal scenes between himself and Mr. Cooper, who was playing Lothario.

He gives the following account of the parts afterwards played in Real Life, by the *Company*, composed of his companions and school-fellows, among whom the characters were distributed for study. "Sciolto, that was to be, for we never performed the play, keeps a chemist's shop in London; Altamont, is many years since numbered with the dead; Lothario, died surgeon of a regiment of light dragoons in the East-Indies;

and Rossano is now a respectable tradesman in Berwick; Calista is the sister of the intended Sciolto, has been twice married, and is still living. Lavinia, the sister of Lothario, and Lucilla, the sister of Rossano, have both been married, and are still living." It appears from this statement, that our hero was the only member of this juvenile company of tragedians, who made the stage his profession.

In the month of April, 1769, when our hero was thirteen years of age, another detachment of the Edinburgh company visited Berwick, erected the standard of taste in the Town Hall, and were flocked to by the gay and the grave, the dissipated and the studious, the vulgar and the refined.

Cooke gives the following account of this party; "Mr. and Mrs. King, I believe, still living at Lyme, in Norfolk, where the lady keeps, or did keep, a school for young ladies; Mr. Buck, Mr. Dancer, late of the Theatres Royal, Norwich and York; Mr. Smith, Mr. Taplin, a surgeon who published a volume of veterinary surgery, and died lately in the king's road, Chelsea, (he married a daughter of the late Mr. Dyer of Covent Garden Theatre,) Mr. Wills, late dancing master in Han-

ey-street, was a musician and occasional actor, and Mr. Joseph Reinagle, afterwards of musical celebrity in Scotland, made a part of the theatrical corps."

The visit of these Thespians set all the boys of Berwick mad again. A company was formed, of which our hero was a member. Their theatre was a deserted barn, their stage the floor, their scenery a motley patch work of mat and paper, and their theatrical dressess a still more motley combination of their own habiliments, with such as could be borrowed from non-performing amateurs. Female characters were entirely omitted, or in theatrical phrase, cut out, except that when Hamlet was *got up*, the Queen was suffered to retain her station, and was represented by a male actor, as when first produced by the immortal author.

George Frederick Cooke made his first appearance before an audience, in the character of Young Meadows, in the opera of Love in a Village. He says, that though he can scarce believe it, at the time he is writing, yet he certainly did get through two songs. If he then sung, it was what he never did afterwards, in public or private.

In Hamlet our hero performed Horatio, which proves, either, that there was some one who was considered a better actor, in the company, or, that some bigger boy, probably the manager, like many other managers, monopolized the leading parts. Power among men, is frequently the result of riches, among boys it resides in strength and size. Cooke certainly was not at the head of this theatrical corps; but he was consoled by the approbation, which some of the Edinburgh actors, who witnessed the play of Hamlet, bestowed on his Horatio.

"During this summer," says he, "I saw the Edinburgh actors play Alexander, Romeo and Juliet, George Barnwell, and the Wonder. I wished much to see Douglas, and not being able to raise the wind, myself and two or three companions, contrived to secrete ourselves under the stage, in the hope of stealing out during the performance, and joining the audience, by means of an aperture we had discovered in a passage leading to the pit. In putting this enterprise into act, we were unfortunately discovered by fat Buck," (one of the company,) "and after a fearful interrogatory, most shamefully handed out at the back door."

It is very probable., that many similar adventures occurred to an active boy like George Frederick, with such an ungoverned propensity towards theatrical exhibitions; and one has been related to me, which bears sufficient marks of probability for insertion.

Cooke and his companions, constantly on the alert to deceive those rigid centinels, the door-keepers, and finding by observation, that the back door was left unguarded until near the hour of performance, contrived to enter unperceived upon this forbidden ground, before the watch was set. Fairly in, the next consideration was, how they should conceal themselves, until the time of raising the curtain should arrive, when they might hope in the confusion and bustle behind the scenes, to escape notice, and enjoy the wonders of the magic show. Cooke espied a barrel, and congratulating himself on this safe and snug retreat, he crept in, like the hero of that immortal modern drama Tekeli, which has been the admiration of the polished populace of the British metropolis. Unfortunately, however, for my hero, as well as the hero of Tekeli, there proved much lurking danger in his lurking-place; a barrel being little less liable to untoward movement

than a buck-basket. Cooke soon perceived that he had, as companions, two twenty-four pound cannon balls; but not yet being initiated into the mysteries of the scene, he did not suspect that cannon balls assisted in making thunder in a barrel, as well as in a twenty-four pounder; poor George Frederick was in the thunder barrel of the Theatre. The play was Macbeth, and for the first scene, to give due effect to the *entré* of the witches, the thunder was wanted. The Jupiter tonans of the theatre, alias, the property-man, approached and seized the barrel. Judge the breathless fear of my hero; it was too great for words, and he only shrunk closer to the bottom of his hiding-place. His tormentor proceeded to cover the open end of the barrel with a piece of old carpet, and tie it carefully to prevent the thunder from being spilt. Still George Frederick was most heroically silent; the machine was lifted by the Herculean property-man, and carried carefully to the side-scene, lest in rolling the thunder should rumble before its *cue*. It would be a hopeless task to paint the agitation of the contents of the barrel; the property-man swearing the cannon bullets were "too damned heavy," placed the complicated machinery in rea-

diness: the witches entered, midst flames of rosin; the thunder bell rang, the barrel received its impetus, and away rolled George Frederick and his ponderous companions. Silence would now have been no virtue, and he roared most manfully, to the surprise of the thunderer, who neglecting to stop the rolling machine, it entered on the stage, and George Frederick bursting off the carpet head of the barrel, appeared before the audience, just as the witches had agreed to meet again, when "the hurly burly's done."

It must have been about this time, that Cooke was bound out by his aunts, apprentice to Mr. John Taylor, a respectable printer at Berwick, now deceased. The good ladies, perhaps, saw with regret his increasing passion for the stage, and thought that labour, and the restraints of wholesome discipline, might check the growing propensity; or more probably, Cooke having arrived at that period of life, at which it is usual to prepare for obtaining a future subsistence, they thought that it was time for him to be instructed in the rudiments of some reputable calling. However this may be, the theatrico-mania had taken such strong possession of Cooke, that so far from being dispelled, it continued not

only to increase in its original subject, but also to infect his associates; the contagion spread from Cooke to his fellow-devils, in whom it raged so violently, that he easily induced them to hire a room for theatrical exhibition. This was of course attempted to be done without the privity of their master, but it could not long be concealed from his knowledge, and he succeeded in driving Cooke and his associates from the scenic field. While our hero, with cork-blacked face, was personating Zanga, to the delight and astonishment of the Canaille of Berwick, the enraged printer dispatched a posse of constables, who rushing in, hurried away the Moorish chief, to bewail, at leisure, a second defeat and captivity.

CHAP. II.

Strolling company comes to Berwick—Cooke acts Lucia in Cato—Goes to London—to Holland—Again in London, 1774—Grecian Daughter—Macklin—Garrick.

IN the beginning of the year 1770, Mr. Fisher came to Berwick with a miserable

company from Scotland. The manager converted an old malt-house into a theatre, and opened with the Provok'd Husband. Poor as this place, with all its paraphernalia, was, it was the first attempt at a regular theatre in Berwick; and as Garrick opened Drury Lane with an occasional prologue, Fisher could do no less for the theatre Berwick upon Tweed; what Johnson wrote it, is not recorded.

"At this place," says Cooke, "I saw the Earl of Essex, Oroonoko, and other pieces, which I do not remember," and certainly it is of little consequence to the reader. What I have quoted shows how strong his propensity was to plays and acting, and is a specimen of what may be called his early theatrical education; he continuing at the same time to read every dramatic production which he could procure. The circulating libraries of the town were the great magazines which supplied him with this favourite food for his imagination.

In the autumn of this year, some of the young men of the town associated for the purpose of performing the tragedy of Cato. Our hero, and his friend, who has been mentioned as the intended Lothario, in the first theatrical scheme Cooke was connected

with, were selected, for their youth, to personate the two Roman ladies, Marcia and Lucia. Lucia, was *enacted* by George Frederick. This important transaction was happily accomplished on the fifth day of November, 1770. They afterwards repeated the play at the theatre, during the absence of the regulars.

From the above circumstances it would appear, either that Mr. Taylor's opinions, as to theatrical performances, had undergone some change, or else that Cooke had contrived to rid himself of the obligation of his indentures. It is certain, that he did not continue a long time in the printing shop. This release probably happened previous to the month of June, 1771, when he was fifteen years old; as according to his own account, he at that time left Berwick for London. The object of his visit to the metropolis he does not mention: indeed, the whole history of his apprenticeship is passed over by him, without the slightest notice. The circumstances, however, are so probable, and have come to me under the sanction of such authority, that I cannot but give credit to them*. It is to be remarked, that Cooke,

* My information was derived from a gentleman who had the circumstances from a son of Mr. Taylor.

not only in his writings, but also in conversation, sedulously avoided the mention of such transactions of his life, as were either dishonourable, or which, in his opinion, detracted from his dignity as a gentleman.

In the month of November following, he went to Holland, for what purpose he has not recorded. "The Cabinet" speaks of his being "embark'd in business," meaning, I presume, some scheme of his friends, to engage his mind in mercantile pursuits, or to initiate him in the mysteries of trade. He once said in my presence, that when a boy he had been a midshipman, on board of a king's ship; this may have been the time. Whatever it was that his friends intended he should learn, he only studied his favourite authors; and a part of his small stock of cash was expended in purchasing the dramatic works of Sir John Vanburgh.

The gratification he received in his favourite pursuit, by witnessing the exhibition of several pieces in London, before his voyage to Holland, he thus mentions. "In the month of October, I saw Oroonoko, and Midas, at Covent Garden.

Oroonoko——Mr. Savigny,
Aboan——Mr. Bensly.

Both still living. (1807.) The former a cutler; the latter, a barrack-master.

Blandford——Mr. Thomas Hull,

The venerable, and respected planner, and father, of the Covent Garden fund.

Capt. Driver——Mr. Dunstall,

An excellent Comedian, in a particular set of characters. (Dead.)

Imoinda——Miss Miller,
Daniel——Mr. Quick.

Still quick.

Charlotte——Mrs. Baker,
The Widow——Mrs. Pitt.

Both dead. The Play was performed as written."

It is difficult to conceive how a polite audience of the metropolis of the British Empire, in the year 1771, could sit and hear the whole of this play, as originally written; but, so it was. Our hero thus proceeds with his bill of fare,

"Midas——Mr. Shuter,
Apollo——Mr. Mattocks,
Pan——Mr. Dunstall,
Silenus——Mr. Baker,
Daphne——Mrs. Baker.
(*All dead.*)
Nysa——Mrs. Mattocks
(*All alive,*) and a truly excellent, comic actress."

In the early part of 1772, our hero returned to Berwick, and continued to read plays with his usual assiduity.

In the summer of 1773, a strolling company, managed by Messrs. Holland and Booth, came to Berwick, and as Mrs. Browne, who afterwards played at Covent Garden with some success, in the same line which Mrs. Jordan filled at Drury Lane, and her sister, Mrs. Mills, afterwards Sparks, were of the company, it was probably better than ordinary. Cooke saw at this period all the round of plays usually performed; Lear, Richard, Hamlet, Othello, Venice Preserv'd, Romeo and Juliet, &c. and doubtless profited by the faults, as well as merits, of the performers. For, at this time, all the powers of his mind were bent with concentrated force to one object; and genius, instead of being misled by the faults of masters in its favourite art, sees their deformity, and avoids them.

He again went to London in the year 1774. At the age of eighteen, with his previous attention to the drama, Mr. Cooke must have been able to appreciate good acting; and, he now saw the greatest masters, both of the sock and buskin. The first play he witnessed on his arrival, it being summer

and only the Hay-Market theatre open, was the Rehearsal. And he saw, for the first time, that inimitable comedian and eccentric wit, Sam Foote, who played Bayes. During the summer he had frequent opportunities of seeing and studying this original actor in many of his own comedies.

The winter campaign opened at Covent Garden with Mr. Murphy's tragedy of the Grecian Daughter, since rendered so popular wherever the English language is spoken by the efforts of one actress, Mrs. Siddons. This play was first performed in the season 1771–2, at Drury Lane; *got up*, under the immediate eye, and with all the skilful attention of Garrick, and its two principal parts played by Mr. and Mrs. Barry. With its first gloss upon it, Mr. Cooke now witnessed its exhibition, though at the *other house*, to which the Barrys had deserted from the standard of Roscius. The cast was at this time,

Evander——Mr. Barry,
Philotas——Mr. Bensly,
Melancthon——Mr. Hull,
Phocion——Mr. Wroughton,
Dyonysius——Mr. Clinch,
Euphrasia——Mrs. Barry.

"Now," says Cooke, "I began to see acting." During this same season, and early in

1775, he first saw Garrick. The character was Leon, in Beaumont and Fletcher's comedy of "Rule a Wife and have a Wife," made popular in our western world by the masterly playing of Mr. Cooper. Mr. Cooke had at this time the pleasure and profit of seeing Macklin. He was present at Covent Garden theatre at the first appearance of that performer, after having been driven from the stage, "by a conspiracy of low tradesmen, who suffered for it afterwards, in the King's bench."

The circumstance to which Mr. Cooke here alludes, is of importance and interest sufficient to excuse me for inserting it in this place; especially as it gave rise to a judicial opinion of the utmost consequence as to the respective rights of actor and auditor, and as the result of it was very much to the honour of a man, who, from the connection of his labors with those of the subject of these memoirs, will in the sequel demand the attention of the reader.

Mr. Macklin was in 1773, engaged by George Colman the elder, then manager of Covent Garden theatre, and it was agreed that Macklin should act Macbeth and Richard III. which parts had, by the secession of

Mr. William Smith, become unappropriated. Smith, however, shortly rejoined the Theatre, and an agreement was made between him and Macklin, with the consent of Mr. Colman, that they should perform those two parts alternately.

At the beginning of the season in the fall of 1773, Macklin performed Macbeth; whether it was that the audience were displeased at his manner of acting that part, or that they were determined to allow no other but Smith to play it, Mr. Macklin was received with strong disapprobation. He was however allowed, yet not without violent opposition, to play Macbeth three times, whilst a newspaper altercation, of which he was the subject, was going on; not only his manner of acting was attacked, but also his general conduct. This arose from a speech which Mr. Macklin made to the audience, in consequence of the treatment he had already received, in which he asserted that Messrs. Sparks and Reddish, had hissed him on the first night of his performance.

Messrs. Sparks and Reddish, who it appears were themselves either retainers, or would-be retainers, of the stage, and were consequently establishing a precedent by which

they might one day suffer, endeavoured to enlist the public, (that is, the mob of the pit and gallery,) on their side; through the medium of the newspapers.

On the third night of his performing Macbeth, Macklin endeavoured to substantiate his charges against Reddish and Sparks. Before the curtain drew, he came on with a manuscript in his hand; part of which, after a violent uproar, he was allowed to read. It contained proofs of his former assertion in relation to those gentlemen. That evening he went through the part with great applause.

The well disposed, and judicious part of the audience, found great reason to approve Macklin's personification of Macbeth; this irritated the others so far, that they entered into a conspiracy to drive him from the stage.

Macklin, unwilling to furnish cause for irritation, however unjust, made his next appearance in Shylock and Sir Archy Mc Sarcasm. His desertion of Macbeth had no effect; the conspirators were determined to proceed to extremities. Heroical journeymen tailors were enlisted in the cause, and the alehouses in the purlieus of the theatre were ransacked for recruits: the new levies were

treated, and led to the play-house; their seats paid for by the ringleaders; and posted in different places under their respective commanders, they waited with impatience the signal of attack.

The curtain was drawn; the riot began; the performers were afraid to continue on the stage, Macklin was driven off, and the managers were compelled, in order to appease the rioters and save their property from destruction, to dismiss him.

An information was exhibited in the King's bench against five of the principal conspirators for a conspiracy and riot. On the trial, one of the parties was found guilty of a riot only; the rest, the jury brought in guilty of the whole information.

When the motion for judgment was made, the parties, by the advice of the court, came to a compromise. It was proposed by Macklin that the conspirators, besides paying his expenses, should take one hundred pounds worth of tickets for Miss Macklin's benefit, one hundred pounds worth of tickets for his own benefit, and as many more, on some one night, as a compensation to the managers. This offer was accepted.

Mr. Macklin, through the whole of these proceedings, conducted himself in a very handsome manner. The chief justice, Lord Mansfield, was so well pleased with his deportment, that at the conclusion of this affair, he addressed to him the following highly flattering and elegant eulogium;

"You have met with great applause to day; you never acted better."

At the time, when Mr. Cooke first saw him, he appeared in Shylock and Sir Archy Mc Sarcasm, in his own farce of Love-a-la-mode, two parts which Macklin usually performed on the same night, and which the writer saw him perform together as late as the seasons 1785–6. These characters two or three times, and Iago once, was all of Macklin's acting which Mr. Cooke ever saw. In Shylock and Sir Archy, Mr. Cooke must be considered as Macklin's legitimate successor to the exclusion of all competition. In Iago he went far beyond him. To these characters of Macklin, Cooke added, without having seen the original, his chef d'ouvre in comedy, Sir Pertinax Mac Sycophant.

"The characters," says Cooke, "I had the happiness of seeing that grand master of the stage, Garrick, illustrate, were Lear;

Hamlet (twice;) Leon (twice;) Benedick (twice;) Don Felix (twice;) and Kitely. Alas! no more. Lear was the last. He took his leave after Don Felix, in a farewell address on the 10th of June, 1776."

CHAP. III.

Cooke first appears as a professed actor at Brentford, in the character of Dumont—Stroller's dressing room—Standen—Mrs. Woodward—Cooke's debut in London, 1778 *—plays Castalio for the benefit of Mrs. Massey—Is engaged for Manchester,* 1783 *—plays with Mrs. Siddons at York,* 1786*—plays at Manchester,* 1788*—Riley—Anecdote of Cooke with the Beau and the Boxer.*

AMONG the various modes of theatrical study, which lead mimic heroes to the *boards*, spouting clubs stand conspicuous. These *seminaries*, so happily ridiculed in Murphy's farce of the Apprentice, made no part of Cooke's ladder to histrionic fame. He never visited a club of spouters but once, when a stage-struck hero like himself, introduced him, and soon after succeeded in persuading

him to try his abilities before the public, as an Actor by profession. For this purpose, the friends repaired to Brentford, (who has not heard of Brentford and its two Kings?) and in that doubly royal town, George Frederick Cooke first faced an audience as a professed actor, in the character of Dumont in the tragedy of Jane Shore. This was in the spring of 1776.

"We dressed," says he, "male and and female, in one room;" (this must remind the reader of Hogarth's print, of stroller's dressing:) "the dressing room, was at the audience end of the house, and we had to pass through them to reach the stage, which was no higher than the floor, the whole theatre being a large room in a public house—*I have forgot the sign.*"

Whether he obtained applause on this occasion, he says he does not remember; and certainly from the nature of the audience, it is of little consequence; but on a following evening in Ensign Dudley in the West Indian, he certainly gained the approbation of this critical assembly.

In the summer of 1777 he visited Berwick and Edinburgh, and having now attained the legal age of manhood, freed from restraint

and without money, he joined a company in Hastings, in Sussex, under the management of one Standen. "He was deaf," says Cooke, "but a perfect Drawcansir in the theatric field. He used to have a book, or part, affixed at the side of the stage, to which he coolly resorted, when he was at a loss for his author;" his guides for speaking, were the lips of those on the stage with him, which he watched attentively, and woe to the actor who made a pause, for breath, or effect, for there ended his speech for that time. And many is the question that by this means was answered before asked, and many were the dialogues that were made inexplicable games at cross purposes. "We acted in the Town hall, and after tiring both natives and strangers, (for Hastings had just began to be visited as a bathing place,) we marched to Rye, twelve miles off, in the same county. Here our theatre was an old school-house. In our company was a little old woman, of the name of Woodward, upwards of seventy years of age, who generally appeared in male characters. I have seen her in Sir Frances Gripe, and the Miser, and have seen both much worse acted. She had an excellent comic appearance, and dressed the Miser after the

manner of Mr. Griffin, who belonged to Drury Lane early in the last century, and was I think the original. At Rye I fell ill of a fever and ague, and returned to London the first of November, leaving many things of my property behind, which I never saw again."

In the spring of the year 1778, Mr. Cooke made his *debut* in London; like Mrs. Siddons, to be neglected and unnoticed, and like her, to return at a future period, and be the great attraction of the theatre.

It was not unfrequent for the Hay Market theatre to be opened, *out of the season*, by permission for a few nights, either for benefits, or for the gratification of private spouters. On this occasion, that theatre was opened for the benefit of Mrs. Massey, and Cooke performed the character of Castalio in Otway's tragedy of the Orphan.

"In the summer of this same year," says Mr. Cooke's chronicle, "I was a member of the company at China-Hall, and acted something on the night the theatre (a wooden building,) was burnt. Mr. O'Reilly, (then Bailly,) the late celebrated comedian of Dublin at that time was a member of our Rotherhithe corps. Mr. Russel, of Drury Lane, was

then a forward promising boy. Afterwards I acted a few nights at the Tennis court in the Borough, which was soon shut up by the Surry magistrates."

Between the time of first acting in London, for Mrs. Massey's benefit, and the autumn of 1779, Mr. Cooke played on various occasions at the Hay-market theatre, the following characters: Modely, in Shirley's comedy of the Country Lasses, since reduced to an afterpiece, and played under the title of the Farm House: Young Belmont, in Mr. Moore's comedy of the Foundling: Lovewell, in Colman and Garrick's comedy of the Clandestine Marriage, and Glenalvon, in Home's tragedy of Douglas.

From this period, Mr. Cooke ran the customary round of Thespian itinerancy, a favourite wherever he appeared, and acquiring a knowledge of his profession, and a power of exerting his talents; which, with ordinary prudence, would have placed him on the throne of Garrick, instead of being a wanderer from town to town, unknown except in the little world which composes a provincial manager's circuit. But prudence was never a virtue of Cooke's, and during his long novitiate as an actor, he acquired habits

as a man, which marred his usefulness, cast a shade over his talents, and finally destroyed him.

In September, 1779, Mr. Cooke became a member of Mr. Fisher's company at Sudbury, in Suffolk. Mr. Philip Lewis, an eccentric humorist, known by the appellation of "the king of grief," was one of this company. He was uncle to the celebrated comedian, Mr. William T. Lewis, of Covent Garden, the late manager, (with Mr. Knight,) of the Liverpool theatre.

In February, 1780, our hero quitted Mr. Fisher, and ceased to tread the boards until October, 1781. Here is a blank of twenty months, during which we lose sight of the actor and the man.

From October, 1781, to December, 1783, the history of Cooke's life is little else than marchings and countermarchings, from Nottingham to Loughborough, from Loughborough to Derby, from Derby to Stamford, and then to Nottingham again, with associates who have never emerged from obscurity, with the exception of Wilson of Covent Garden theatre, who trod in the footsteps of Shuter, both in public and private life. During this period, however, our

hero was at different times in London, and had an opportunity of improvement, by studying that excellent actor, Mr. Henderson.

"I come now," says Mr. Cooke, "to a more important era in my theatrical career. Having obtained an engagement for the Manchester theatre, from Mr. James Miller of Shrewsbury, who was then acting manager, I left Louth on Saturday, the twenty-seventh of December, 1783, and arrived at the lower Swan Inn, in Manchester, (at that time kept by Dixon,) on Tuesday evening, the thirtieth. The next day, I went to private lodgings. I made my first appearance on Friday the second of January, 1784, in Philotas, in the Grecian Daughter, and was received with much applause. It was not a very favourable character for a first appearance, but the *then* heroes of Manchester did not seem inclined to participate, or even lend, their "blushing honours," for they were all strangers, having only the advantage of me in priority of standing by about a month. This is a courtesy, (the choice of a part for a first appearance,) which has long been established in well-governed theatres; but the Manchester theatre, at this time under Mr. Miller, who had been chiefly used to small

detachments, was really governed by a cabal, not one of whom are now living, or ever mentioned in theatrical society."

The part of Philotas, as Mr. Cooke very justly observes, was not well calculated to make a strong impression on an audience, or place the actor in a favourable point of view, although it has been said, that the only original idea belonging to the tragedy, is put in his mouth. It is, when hearing that the life of Evander had been saved, by the nourishment administered from his daughter's breasts; he exclaims

> "All her laws,
> Inverted quite, great nature triumphs still!"

Mr. Murphy, though a learned, was a dull man, and his Grecian Daughter is a dull common-place poem. The incidents are affecting, but they are not of his invention. His comedies and farces have much more merit than his tragedies. Mrs. Siddons made the Grecian Daughter a sublime and attractive exhibition, as Lewis, Munden, and Fawcet, made Reynolds' Trifling Farces in five acts, pass for genuine and humourous, (if not witty,) comedies.

These actors contradict the old adage, *ex nihilo nil fit*; for they certainly make a great deal out of nothing.

Such were the difficulties which our hero encountered on stepping upon his afterwards favourite ground of Manchester. But his talents overcame all difficulties, and he ever remained the delight of the Manchester audience.

He played at Manchester until the theatre closed, on the 7th of June; and on the 15th went to Lancaster, and engaged for the summer season with Messrs. Austin and Whitlock who then were managers of a company for Newcastle upon Tyne, Chester, Whitehaven, Lancaster, and Preston. This is the same Mr. Whitlock, who with his lady, a sister of Mrs. Siddons, came to this country with Mr. Wignell's first company for the Chesnut-street theatre in Philadelphia, and were afterwards in the New-York theatre, under the direction of the writer. From Lancaster the company went to Preston, and there Mr. Cooke made an engagement with Mr. Mattocks for the Liverpool and Manchester Theatres. In September he played for the first time in Liverpool, opening in Frankley in the Suspicious Husband. In December the company removed to Manchester, and on the fifth of February he left his situation, (and the stage) for three months; the cause he gives

thus, " Sir Peter Teazle, which I had acted at Manchester the preceding season with applause, was given at Liverpool to Moss, (a doubtful actor,) who at Manchester suddenly left us. The part was then sent to me, and I refused it; the consequence was I left the company."

In June, 1785, he again joined Austin and Whitlock's company at Lancaster.

A performer, now in this country, who was a member of the above named company, gives me the following particulars of Mr. Cooke's habits, and the estimation in which he was held.

As an actor he was in great estimation; his salary was two guineas a week, the highest then given in that company; he was accustomed to have a given time for study, not unusually long, was always very perfect, and had the reputation of being a *correct actor.*

His habits of living were pretty much the same as when in America, only he would abstain from excess for three months at a time, and behave with the greatest propriety; but when he broke from this restraint, he was not to be heard of for several days; where he hid himself may easily be imagined.

On the 29th of July, 1786, Mr Cooke made his first appearance at York in the character of Count Baldwin, in the tragedy of Isabella, and on the same night Mrs. Siddons first appeared at that place, after her great success in London. Our hero here first became acquainted with the greatest tragic actress, as I believe, the world ever saw. Two years before the period here mentioned, the writer first saw her, and in this same character of Isabella, at Drury Lane theatre. It was but in the year 1782, that Mrs. Siddons, to use the words of Mr. Murphy, "came upon mankind in the character of Isabella, and astonished even those who remembered Mrs. Cibber."

Mrs. Sarah Siddons is the eldest child of Mr. Roger Kemble and Sarah his wife, who are always spoken of as respectable people, and good provincial actors, but who certainly would never have been the subjects of fame or the objects of inquiry, had they not been the parents of Sarah Siddons and John Philip Kemble. Miss Sarah Kemble married Mr. Siddons, then a performer in her father's company, contrary to the will of her parents; who did every thing in their power to prevent their children becoming actors, or being connected with the stage. Mrs. Siddons first appeared in

London in the year 1775, on the 25th of December, under the management of Garrick. She played Portia in the Merchant of Venice twice, then sunk into comedy of the modern school, walked as Venus in a Jubilee procession, and at the end of the season was discharged. After playing in some of the lesser provincial theatres, Mrs. Siddons, became the heroine of Bath, from whence she was transplanted to London, her powers and judgment matured, where she shone unrivalled, until a few months since, when she retired from the stage.

She has a marked and noble countenance, and when the writer saw her, a figure as justly symetrical, as it was to the last eminently dignified. Her action and attitude were evidently the dictate of feeling, but they were as evidently corrected by a refined taste. Lady Macbeth walking in her sleep; Mrs. Beverly staring, in the mute despair of perfected misery, by the side of her husband's corpse; Euphrasia prostrating herself at the feet of Philotas, to express her gratitude to the preserver of her father; are the perfection of the tragic art.

Mrs. Siddons played at this time, with Tate Wilkinson's company in York, Hull, and

Leeds. Cooke, mentioning it, does not say, as he would of an ordinary person, that Mrs. Siddons went with the company to Hull and Leeds, but "the company went with Mrs. Siddons to Hull and Leeds."

Mr. Cooke says, "I do not remember whether the prices were raised, but I believe they were, our audiences certainly were very crowded. I shall not say much of the Yorkshire theatres, as the late manager, Mr. Wilkinson, has published a history of them, both in his own life, and in the "Wandering Patentee," which is another history of his life. *One* may serve for a real monarch, but a mimic king must have *two*."

Our hero had been, previously to his playing at York, engaged by Mr. Austin for the Chester theatre, expressly to play with Mrs. Siddons. He accordingly repaired to that city in September, and remained to the end of the theatrical season; after which he returned to the York company at Hull, accompanied them to York, and left them the 12th of May, 1787. During this summer, he played with various provincial companies, and in January, 1788, made his first appearance at the Theatre Royal, Newcastle upon Tyne, in the character of Othello; here he

says, " I met with most flattering applause, which I continued to receive, while I remained attached to the theatre. My own night the first season, was Richard the Third, in which Miss Duncan, now of Drury-Lane theatre, acted the Duke of York."

At the conclusion of the season, the company moved to Chester races. The race-week over, Mr. Cooke went to Manchester. The Manchester company consisted at this time of Messrs. Cooke, Westcott, Banks, Tyrrel, Hurst, Hollingsworth, Maddocks, T. Banks, George King, Tony Lebrun, Riley, (under the name of Romney,) and Connor; Messdames Taylor, Simpson, Sidney, Piele, Jackson, Maddocks, and Romney. During the short residence Mr. Cooke now made at Manchester, the curious scene took place, which Riley has happily described in his Itenerant. " One evening in Manchester, we were in a public bar, amongst promiscuous company, where Cooke was as usual the life of the party. Mirth and good humour prevailed, till about ten o'clock, when I perceived a something lurking in his eye, which foretold a storm. Anxious to get him home before it burst forth, I pressed our departure, under the plea of another engagement; but,

instead of having the desired effect, it precipitated what I had foreseen. With a haughty supercilious look, he said, "I see what you are about, you hypocritical scoundrel! You canting methodistical thief! am I, George Frederick Cooke, to be controlled by such a would-be puritan as you? I'll teach you to dictate to a tragedian." Then pulling off his coat, and holding his fist in a menacing attitude; "Come out," continued he, "thou prince of deceivers, though thou hast faith to remove mountains, thou shalt not remove me—Come out, I say!" With some difficulty he was pacified, and resumed his coat.

There was a large fire in the bar, before which stood, with his skirts under each arm, a pitiful imitation of *Buckism*, very deficient in cleanliness and costume. His face was grimy, and his neckcloth of the same tint, which nevertheless was rolled in various folds about his throat; his hair was matted and turned up, under a round greasy hat, with narrow brims, conceitedly placed on one side of his head, which nodded under it like a shaking mandarin. Thus equipped, the filthy fop straddled before the fire, which he completely monopolized. At length, he

caught the eye of our Tragedian, who in silent amazement for the space of half a minute, examined him from top to toe, then turning to me he burst into a horse laugh, and roared out, "*Beau nasty*, by—." Perhaps intimidated by Cooke's former bluster, this insensible puppy took little notice; but I knew George would not stop here, and indeed I thought the stranger fair game. Cooke now rose from his seat, and taking up the skirts of his coat in imitation of the other, turned his back to the fire, "warm work in the *back settlements*, Sir," said he; then approaching still nearer, as if he had some secrets to communicate, whispered, though loud enough for every one to hear,—

"Pray, Sir, how is soap?"

"Soap?"

"Yes, Sir, soap. I understand it is coming down."

"I am glad of it, Sir."

"Indeed, Sir, you have cause, if one may judge from your appearance."

Here was a general laugh, which the stranger seemed not to regard, but nodding his head, and hitting his boots with a little rattan, rang the bell with an air of importance, and inquired "if he could have a *weal kitlet*, or a *mutton chip?*"

"What do you think," says Cooke, "of a *roasted puppy?* because," taking up the poker, "I will spit you, and roast you in a minute."

This had a visible effect upon the dirty beau, he retreated towards the door, Cooke following; "Avaunt, and quit my sight, thy face is dirty, and thy hands unwashed; Avaunt, avaunt! I say!" then replacing the poker, and returning to his seat, he continued, "being gone, I am a man again."

It happened that Perrins, the noted pugilist, made one of the company this evening; he was a remarkably strong man, and possessed of great modesty and good nature; the last scene took such effect on his imagination, that he laughed immoderately.—Cooke's attention was attracted, and turning towards him, with his most bitter look; "What do you laugh at, Mr. Swabson? hey? Why, you lubber-headed thief, Johnson would have beat two of you! laugh at me! at George Frederick Cooke! Come out, you scoundrel!"

The coat was again off, and putting himself in an attitude, "this is the arm that shall sacrifice you." Perrins was of a mild disposition, and knowing Cooke's character, made every allowance, and answered him only by a

smile, till aggravated by language and action the most gross, he very calmly took him in his arms, as though he had been a child, set him down in the street, and bolted the door. The evening was wet, and our hero, without coat or hat, unprepared to cope with it; but entreaty for admission was vain, and his application at the window unattended to. At length, grown desperate, he broke several panes, and inserting his head through the fracture, bore down all opposition by the following witticism: "Gentlemen, I have taken some *pains* to gain admittance, pray let me in, for *I see through my error.*" The door was opened, dry clothes procured, and about one o'clock in the morning, we sent him home in a coach."

This is a good characteristic story, but I cannot see much to admire in the "witticism," which "bore down all opposition." Cooke read this story in my presence, when at Philadelphia, in 1811; he did not much relish it, but made no denial. He was mortified, however, very evidently, by the character which Riley gives of him, by way of introduction. "George Cooke is so well known as an actor, that my opinion can neither add to, nor diminish his fame; were either in my power

panegyric would run through a dozen pages, and yet fall short of his merits. In some characters, he is as much superior to any actor of the present day, as Garrick was to those of his time; but they are limited to such parts as suit his figure, which wants grace and proportion; where these can be dispensed with, he has no competitor. As a man in private life, he is the gentleman, the scholar, the friend, the life of every party, an enemy to scandal and detraction, and benevolent, even to imprudence. Such is George Cooke, in his sober hours; but when stimulated by the juice of the grape, he acts in diametrical opposition to all this. No two men, however different they may be, can be more at variance, than George Cooke, sober, and George Cooke, in a state of ebriety. At these times, his interesting suavity of manners changes to brutal invective; the feelings of his nearest and dearest friends are sacrificed; his best benefactor wounded, either in his own person, or in that of his tenderest connexions, and the ears of delicacy assaulted, by abuse of the grossest nature. Such are the unfortunate propensities of this singular man; unfortunate, I say, because he seems incapable of avoiding them; although they have a tendency to ruin his health,

injure his property, and destroy his social connexions. No one can more regret these failings, than he does in his hours of sanity, or make more handsome apologies; and if at night he creates enemies, his conciliatory manners in the morning, are sure to raise double the number of friends."

Notwithstanding the soothing flattery which gilded this bitter pill, Cooke found it very difficult to swallow. He was conscious that but a small portion of the picture of George Frederick Cooke, as a private man, was true. And the fulsome panegyric at the beginning and end of this character, could not compensate for the terrible truths which it contained. Besides, Mr. Cooke had too much shrewdness, to suppose that the world would accept as an apology for his vices, the pitiful excuse of, *he could not help it*, "unfortunate," "because he seems incapable of avoiding them." Vice, or virtue, is in the choice of every man. Circumstances may make his adherence to virtue more or less difficult, but still the choice is his, and the consequences are justly his due. We shall see in the progress of this work, that when the object which was to be obtained by sobriety and industry, was in Mr. Cooke's opinion sufficiently precious, he could be temperate, and

make every necessary application to business. This year he again played with Mrs. Siddons at Newcastle. After the Newcastle season of 1789, Mr. Cooke paid a visit to Berwick and Edinburgh, (not in his professional capacity,) and returned again to Newcastle, to join the company at the assizes.

CHAP. IV.

Mrs. Jordan—London Actors of 1784—5 *and* 6—*Mr. Munden—Mr. S. Kemble—Sheffield and Show-man—Mr. Cooke at Buxton in* 1791—*his habits at that time—at Liverpool,* 1792—*Mrs. Crouch—Mr. Cooke at Buxton,* 1794—*his remarks on Boswell's Johnson—visit to Mr. Slater, at Macclesfield—remarks on various authors—on the American revolution—Scene and reflections at the Bull's-head, Fairfield—is engaged for Dublin, and arrives there.*

AT the Newcastle assizes, in 1789, Mr. Cooke first saw and played with Mrs. Jordan, an actress who in comedy, particularly in girls of every description, stands as unrivalled, as Mrs. Siddons does in the sublime, the terrible, and the pathetic of tragedy. When the writer of this memoir saw Mrs. Jordan, she was in the hey-day of youth, and

as perfect in symmetry as she has ever been in skill. At that time, the melody of her voice, the beauty of her countenance, and the perfect proportions of her form, joined to an enchanting frankness of manner, and complete *naiveté* of expression, made her performances of girls, the most finished exhibitions that ever graced a stage. She frequently at this period appeared in male attire, and, a compliment to the actress, though none to the woman, she, on such occasions, was altogether divested of that restraint, with which feminine modesty shackles the movements of most female performers, when exposed to the unrestricted gaze of a licentious multitude. As a singer of simple melodies, she delighted the town by a manner as full of feeling as of nature. Mrs. Jordan likewise played in tragedy, and in the fine ladies of comedy, but in those peculiar walks, her two great contemporaries, Siddons and Farren, not only eclipse, but annihilate her; nor could she in tragedy bear any comparison with Miss Brunton, afterwards Mrs. Merry, who appeared in London one or two seasons after her.

Mr. Cooke played with this accomplished actress, then in the meridian splendour of her brightest days, at Chester, shortly after their

first meeting at Newcastle. This same year, our hero first met and played with one of the greatest comic actors of the English stage, Mr. King, the original and unrivalled Lord Ogleby, Sir Peter Teazle, Sir Bashful Constant, Sir John Restless, and a hundred others of the first description of strong comic characters of a *certain age*. At the period above alluded to, when the four unrivalled actresses just mentioned, with Mrs. Abington, Mrs. Mattocks, Miss Pope, Miss Younge, Mrs. Crouch, Miss George, (since Mrs. Oldmixon,) Mrs. Wrighten, Mrs. Martyr, Mrs. Wells, were the bright attractions of the London stage, the male performers shone no less a constellation of rare histrionic genius. When to the name which gave rise to this digression, Mr. King, I add those of Henderson, Macklin, Smith, Kemble, Lewis, John Palmer, two Aickins, Bannister, senr. and junr. Parsons, Bensley, Suet, Quick, Edwin, Wewitzer, Wilson, Johnstone, Dodd, Baddeley, Moody, Hull, Pope, and Holman, the reader will perhaps allow, that the dramatic entertainment of 1784—5 and 6, has not been since outdone, except in tragedy, when Kemble, Cooke, and Siddons, united to form one blaze of histrionic talent.

During the year 1790, Mr. Cooke continu-

ed playing with Messrs. Austin and Whitlock's company, at the several theatres in their circuit. Mr. Munden left the company at Chester, for the great object of every actor's ambition, a situation in London. Mr. Munden found a distinguished one, or rather made it so by his merit. Mr. Stephen Kemble joined the company at Sheffield, having purchased Mr. Whitlock's property. This gentleman is no small member of the great family of the Kembles, and is sometimes called the great Kemble, from his enormous size. He is remarkable for conceiving that he can play Falstaff, because he wants no stuffing for the part, and for playing Hamlet, although conscious of that deformity, which is his only qualification for the witty as well as fat Knight. Mr. Cooke makes us suspect that there was something rather barbarous in the taste of the Sheffield audience, or of Mr. S. Kemble, the new manager, when he tells us, that "among other strange modes of entertaining the town, Mr. Kemble introduced a travelling Jew, in the dress of a North American Indian, who pretended to show the method of scalping, and to add to the amusement of the spectators, the savage Israelite devoured raw mutton for the gratification of their appetite and his own." I am sorry

that I cannot record the name of this great master of the terrific, and that I am altogether in the dark, as to the hero who suffered himself with commendable fortitude, to be scalped, for the entertainment of the polished people of Sheffield, but though history has not recorded his name, I have found, upon *record most authentic*, the price at which he rated his sufferings; viz. two and six-pence. I gather this valuable information from Riley, who in his Itenerant, has told a story of a similar exhibition under Mr. S. Kemble's management.

" At the period his" Tragedy Tom's " benefit was announced, there happened to arrive at Newcastle a show: no less a person than the prince *Anamaboo*, was to to be seen at the small price of one shilling. Tom, without delay, waited on the proprietor, and for a handsome sum, prevailed upon his highness to exhibit his royal person on the stage that evening. The manager, with much good humour, consented, and the bills of the day announced, that, between the acts of the play, *prince Anamaboo*, would give a lively representation of the *scalping operation*; he would likewise give the Indian war-whoop, in all its various tones, the tomahawk exercise, and

the mode of feasting at an Abyssinian banquet. The evening arrived, and many people attended to witness these *princely* imitations. At the end of the third act, his *highness* walked forward with dignified step, flourishing his tomahawk, and cut the air, exclaiming, "ha ha, ho ho!" next entered a man with his face blacked, and a piece of bladder fastened to his head with gum; the *prince*, with a large carving knife, commenced the scalping operation, which he performed in a style truly *imperial*, holding up the skin in token of triumph. Next came the war whoop, which was a combination of dreadful and discordant sounds; and lastly the Abyssinian banquet, consisting of raw beef steaks; these he made into rolls as large as his mouth would admit, and devoured them in a *princely* and dignified manner. Having completed his cannibal repast, he flourished his tomahawk in an exulting manner, exclaimed, "ha ha, ho ho!" and made his exit."

The reader will perceive that the scene of Riley's story, is Newcastle, and of Cooke's, Sheffield; but I suppose that king Stephen having seen the great effect produced at Newcastle, carried the prince to Sheffield.

The property-man's bill, explains by the following item, who the person was that was scalped.

"Goin on myself to be scalp, 2s. 6d."

During a part of August in this year, 1791, Mr. Cooke was, as he expressed it, a "member of an errant strolling company," at Buxton, in Derbyshire. This watering place was at that time a long ill-built village, surrounded by hills. It is 159 miles from London, 33 from Derby, 24 from Manchester, and 24 from Sheffield, lying midway between the two last mentioned places. The place called a theatre, at the time my hero was the hero of its stage, was a mean ill-constructed thatched building; and the performers, by his account of them, worthy of their covering. The church, Cooke says, was "a wretched hovel, worse than the theatre."

At this period, and at the age of thirty-five, those habits which continued with Mr. Cooke to the end of his life, had taken pretty firm hold of him, but the worst of them had not yet grown to that enormous magnitude, as to weaken his faculties, and injure his health. His habit of desultory reading was fixed; he read much more, than from his other habits might be expected, but it was any thing that

chance threw in his way. His judgment on the authors who thus fell in his hands, was decisive and just, and his remarks always honourable to his acuteness and taste. But if the book was ever so bad, he read it through. He at this time, as through the remainder of life, passed many hours in solitude, and indulged himself in long and solitary walks, frequently with a book, and sometimes with the part he was studying for representation.

At this time and place, he played *Tancred*, in *Tancred and Sigismunda*, *Major O'Flaherty, in the West Indian*; *Joseph Surface*, *School for Scandal*; *Moody* in the *Country Girl*, and *Rover*, in *Wild-oats*. Of this last play, he mentions, reading it to the company assembled in their thatched house, and then gives the following opinion. "By a comparative view with true English comedy writers, or indeed with those of any other nation, O'Keefe's pretensions, as a dramatic author, can be allowed no higher praise, than that he is an agreeable farce-maker, or in other words, an ingenious and pleasing arranger of nonsense, and one degree removed above a pantomime-maker; confusion and improbability of plot, if indeed there is any, ignorance of character, trite sentiment, most absurdly misplaced, low

and vulgar conceits, sometimes bordering upon indecency, form a comedy by Mr. O'Keefe."

This same year, Mr. Cooke was engaged by Mr. Banks, for the Manchester theatre, to play during the races, and for the winter season of Chester and Manchester, Mr. Banks and Mr. Thomas Ward being managers of both theatres. In September, the Chester season commenced, and Mr. Cooke repaired thither, having left his Buxton friends on the 2d instant. During this season, he went with a party over to Liverpool, for the ostensible purpose of playing Mason's Elfrida, for the benefit of Mrs. Arnold, (formerly Miss Jameson, of Vauxhall gardens.) They suffered themselves to be advertised for the above piece, though conscious that they knew nothing of it, and had made no one preparation; the audience came as invited, and they, without apology, or announcing any change of play, acted, or, (as Cooke says, I doubt not with truth,) murdered Thomson's Tancred and Sigismunda. From Chester, our hero went according to agreement, to Manchester; and while there, in February, 1792, he was engaged for the ensuing summer at Liverpool, by Mr. Francis Aickin.

At Liverpool the company consisted principally of London performers. Messrs. King, Holman, Munden, Fawcett, Dignum, Messdames Mattocks, Mountain, and Powell, were the stars that attracted the gazers, while Cooke, with all that brilliancy of genius which, when removed to London, eclipsed these luminaries, was now to the Liverpool Merchants a mere supernumerary figure in the picture. English traders know gold to be gold, even before it has passed through the Mint, but dramatic merit is never acknowledged until it has passed the mint of the Metropolitan audience. An actor whose utmost income shall have been two guineas a week, if removed to London, is engaged by the same provincial managers at ten, fifteen, or twenty, per night; and the manager is right, for all the town and country now flock to see that which they had before neglected, and to cry with self-complacency, "I always said he was a great actor."

Mr. Cooke has recorded, that at this time he played Lear for his own benefit. I presume this was the first time that he had played this very arduous character.

Mrs. Crouch who had been engaged to come to Manchester to a musical meeting,

likewise played a few nights; and Mr. Cooke says, "for want of a singer who could speak, a want very often felt in all theatres, I had the pleasure of acting Lord Aimworth to her Patty." This was in the Maid of the Mill. Mr. Cooke remarks, that her voice and the beauty of her face were yet unimpaired. At that period which the reader will have observed the writer frequently recurs to, viz, 1784–5 and 6, this lady was the heroine of the English Opera in one of its branches, and the most perfect beauty on the stage. As Miss Philips, in the character of Miranda in the Tempest, she was the personification of innocent loveliness.

The year 1793, was passed by Mr. Cooke much as the preceding, and at the same places.

In July, 1794, I find him again at Buxton; whether the theatre and Church had been amended in the meantime, he does not say. But on the 6th of this month he commenced a journal, from which I find that his habits were much the same. His books were drawn from Moore's circulating library in the Crescent, and the first upon the list "Boswell's Johnson." After having read the work, which filled up intervals, in five days, he gives this opinion: "Upon considering Johnson's life,

which seems very accurately delineated by Boswell, I do not find the Doctor that amiable, nor, sometimes respectable, character I expected or wished. He is drawn overbearing, arrogant, extremely vain of his literary abilities, and forgetting all decorum when the company he happened to be in did not pay him that implicit attention and obedience *he* thought, even from men of equal or superior learning, he had a right to demand. Harsh and rude to women, and affecting to depreciate the literary merit of others, constituting himself sole judge of literary differences. In dramatic composition, which he affected a knowledge of, he was extremely defective, as his tragedy of Irene shows, and equally so in his judgment of the writings of others; he would never, else, have given Dodsley's Cleone, whatever its merit, the preference to any or all of Otway's pieces. His sarcasms at, and abuse of, Mr. Garrick, seem dictated by envy; he sickened at the praise of others. The late Mr. Thomas Sheridan declining any correspondence with him, after the impudent and illiberal expression respecting his pension, showed a just, manly, and proper resentment. Johnson's moral and religious writings place him in an elevated and honourable situation, and the English language is most highly indebted

to him for explanations and embellishment. It is much to be wondered at, with that ardent zeal he professed for the doctrines of Christianity, he did not pay a greater deference to one of the precepts of its divine founder. *Humility* does not seem to make any part of his character. His biographer has, (however accurate it may be,) spun out his work to a most tedious length. A handsome 8vo might be collected from his two 4to's, and the remainder consigned to oblivion. I have never read Sir John Hawkins' life of the Doctor, or any of Mrs. Thrale's anecdotes, letters, &c. and probably never shall; but according to Mr. B. facts are much misrepresented. It is a matter of surprise to me, that Mr B. should censure Mrs. Thrale for being tired of Johnson's caprice, and troublesome manners, which she had endured so many years, when upon a short visit at Mr. Boswell's, the delicacy of Mrs. B. was so much hurt at his (Johnson's) "uncouth late hours, holding the candles downwards and dropping the wax on the carpet;" puerile and contemptible! Most of Mr. B.'s own letters, all his law cases and private history, ought to be expunged; some brief notes would have connected the matter in a much more agreeable manner to the reader. Or the title page of the book should

have been, " Lives of Dr. Johnson and the *Laird of Auchinleek*." But diffidence is a rare quality to be found in a native of that part of Great-Britain which had the honour of giving birth to Mr. Bo-*swell*. Among the many beautiful and brilliant effusions of Doctor Johnson's pen, his lines to the memory of Mr. Levet, ought not to be passed over."

During these five days he appears to have studied *Octavian* in the Mountaineers, and to have played it. Of the performance he says, " the piece done decently; drank some rum and water during the performance, which I found laid hold of me; afterwards went to the Angel (Inn) with Williams, and played some games at drafts, and took a few throws at hazard. In some situations I feel the spirit of gaming. Came home, supped, and sat tiring my Landlord with talking to him. Went to bed some time early in the morning, but precisely at *what* time I know not."

The next day, lounged and sauntered: " much indisposed all day, a weariness and lassitude attending it; I suppose from the night before: mind wandering and very confused; hope, and will endeavour, not to stain paper with the account of such another day." Alas! poor Cooke, it was easy to keep this resolution by avoiding the ink pot, instead of

avoiding that which caused the misery and inanity of the day.

On Sunday the 13th of July, Cooke, in compliance with an invitation from Mr. Slater a drawing master in Macclesfield, mounted on horseback and rode thither. After breakfasting and dressing he accompanied his friend Slater to church, and heard the rev'd Mr. Sharpe read prayers and preach; he, says Cooke, "read the service very well, compared to the bulk of church readers, and preached a good sermon from Psalm 139. v. 2. In the afternoon, after reading *Pasquin's* "Life of Lord Barrymore," he remarks on it—"the most inflated bombastic stuff I ever read." He at this time sat to Mr. Slater for a portrait, and in the evening supped with several of the gentlemen of the town. The next day his friend Williams came over from Buxton, and they dined in company with Mr. Slater at Doctor Newbold's. "After dinner," says Cooke, "joined by Mr. Langford and the Rev. Mr. Monkhouse of Presbury, the glass circulated very freely; adjourned to Mr. Langford's; drank some more wine, and joined by more company—Went to the Angel, (an Angel in every town,) and drank some more there, what I know not; and a little before dusk, walked (with Williams,) to the

skirt of the town, on our return to Buxton—my horse so skittish, and I so tipsy, I could not mount him. Rode Williams's a little way, when alighting, and endeavouring to bestride my own again, he got away from under me, and set out for home. Williams rode on, and I returned on foot to Macclesfield, and went immediately to bed at the Angel." So much for repentance without amendment. The next day, Williams came back to Macclesfield, and after dinner, Cooke having procured another horse, rode back to Buxton, and that evening played *Lord Townly*, rather a different character, from that in which he had appeared the preceding evening at Macclesfield.

During this visit to Buxton, besides Octavian, and Lord Townly, already mentioned, he played Hotspur, Harry Dornton, Haswell, Sir George Airy, Oakly, Young Marlow, Freeport, Petruchio, Faulkland, The Guardian, Jaques, Young Wilding, Rover, Sir Robert Ramble, Anthony Euston, and Sir Callaghan O'Brallaghan.

After *Boswell's Johnson*, the next work which occupied his attention, was "Goldsmith's Poetical works," then "Gleanings," by the Rev. J. Moir; next, "The Danish Massacre," a Novel; and then "Savage's

works," on which he makes some judicious remarks.

Of the tragedy of *Sir Thomas Overbury*, he says, "about seventeen or eighteen years ago, I saw it acted at Covent Garden theatre, I believe twice; I have a clearer recollection of the Epilogue spoken by Mrs. Hartley, who played Isabella, wherein the cruelty of the author's mother is mentioned, and some pointed allusions to the French theatre, about to be established at that time, than I have of any part of the play. It was well received, when brought out a few years ago, but the story is not sufficiently known, or interesting. The comedy of "Love in a Veil," reads pleasantly, and I think, curtailed, would please in the representation. In general, the plots of the Spanish comedies, and this is modelled from them, are love intrigues, mistakes, embarrassments, rather farcically, and sometimes pantomimically worked up."—Speaking of "The progress of a Divine," he says, "the wit cannot excuse the great obscenity that disgraces it." He comments on the beauties and defects of the "Wanderer," and reprobates that fulsome adulation, in the dedication to Lord Tyrconnel, which the author's subsequent behaviour was so little consonant with.

His next reading was "Scarron's comical works," with which he professes himself content, but detects in one of the Romances, part of the plot of Mrs. Cowley's "Which is the Man." He next reads a "Tour through Sweden," &c. His next books are the "Life of Thomas Ruddiman, by G. Chalmers;" and "a survey of the Russian Empire." He then reads "Goldsmith's England," and looks into "*Rapin.*" He then takes up "Travels on the *Rhine.*" Next followed, "Memoirs of Dumourier," and Peltier's "Picture of Paris," which lead him into a disquisition on the French revolution, occupying several pages; in the course of which, he makes a comparison in favour of this country, which I will transcribe.

"Within the last twenty years, the thirteen States of America, an amazing tract of country, threw off their allegiance to Great Britian, and declared themselves independent. This revolution was conducted with firmness and wisdom; we heard of no murders, no assassinations, no multiplied and terrifying executions, no private gangs of execrable villains, marking their steps by blood and rapine. The rules of war, were

on both sides strictly adhered to, nor did they ever lose sight of humanity. Washington, whose name will grace the page of history to the end of time, tempered his success with prudence and moderation. Just as he was in the field, he appears in the senate. Above all mean, unworthy considerations, he is actuated by real patriotism; and the rising Federal government, while they pursue his plans, will increase their own importance, among the nations of the earth, without injury to any state whatever."

My hero's next reading, was "Lady Wortley Montague's works," and he appreciated them justly, making pertinent and judicious remarks. Mr. Eyre's "Maid of Normandy," a tragedy, next falls in his way, and he pronounces it a very indifferent performance. "The Adventures of a Watch," comes next, which he also condemns, but unlike a genuine reviewer, reads. Mr. Sewell's tragedy of *Sir Walter Raleigh*, is thus mentioned; "The author seems to have read *some plays*, though but little acquainted with the drama. The language is neither correct nor harmonious, and the whole is laboured, dry, and, (notwithstanding the subject,) uninteresting. A short time ago it was *revived by Mr. Kem-*

ble, at Drury-Lane, with some alterations, but with little effect."

"Capt. Tench's New South Wales," next engages his attention, and he remarks copiously on it. And then begins to read, "Stedman's American War," a book which pleased him, and on which he founded all those opinions, respecting this country, which he so liberally uttered when he visited it. The images impressed upon his memory in 1794, were revived in 1810, and he in conversation, showed himself well acquainted with all the events of our revolution, and to have more vivid ideas of the battles and skirmishes of the war, than most of the native citizens of the country that he met with. The prejudices of Stedman were, of course, adopted by Cooke; and his opinions of the cause of our revolutionary quarrel, and the causes of our success, were all founded upon this author.

This, with "Drinkwater's Siege of Gibraltar," and "Marmontel's Tales," is a faithful account of Mr. Cooke's reading, for about 9 weeks, and when to this is added news-papers, reviews, and the necessary reading, accompanying his professional exertions, it will not appear trifling in magnitude. During this visit to Buxton, he continued his accustomed habit of sauntering, and sometimes

took long and solitary walks to the adjacent villages, and to spots, which are considered as among the curiosities of Derbyshire. But the Angel Inn, or the Brown Bear, or the Red Lion, or some other Inn, or tavern, too often were the scenes of his evening-*pleasures*, and *early in the morning*, too frequently his time of retiring to bed. The next day, he is indisposed, and then follow fruitless resolutions of amendment. "Humour," says he, "passion, and caprice, have made strange disturbance in my mind, it is time to reinstate reason in her just and proper authority, and obey her dictates with alertness and steadiness."

Martin and Williams, were his usual companions at Buxton, and he often mentions drinking tea and supping with Mr. and Mrs. Williams. Mr. Slater, of Macclesfield, appears to be his only correspondent. With the company, and the manner of conducting theatrical business, he seems to be uniformly discontented. Of his benefit he says, "it was better than I expected, as the beggarly plan adopted and pursued, by petty companions, I am an entire stranger to."

I will extract from his diary, the events, and reflections of one day; the reader will perceive my reasons for the selection.

"*Wednesday, August 13th*, 1794.

"Arose about one, P. M.—dined—walked with Mr. Wentworth to Fairfield—drank some porter at the Swan—set out from thence, and took a long walk upon the hills, and among the rocks, gathered some mushrooms, and returned to Fairfield—called at the Bull's-head, and drank some brandy and water.—Among some other persons there, was a certain clergyman, who is said to be a man of literature and abilities; certian he writes A. M. after his name.—He was dirty, drunk, and foolish.—Some of the company, though they all professed a respect for him, seemed to use him as an object of their mirth. I could not help viewing him with pity;—not that sensation which approaches to contempt, but a real sorrowful feeling, as I cannot, to please myself, otherwise express it. In viewing him, I thought of others. Drunkenness is the next leveller to death; with this difference, that the former is always attended with shame and reproach; while the latter, being the certain lot of mortality, produces sympathy, and may be attended with honour. From the general temper of the world, it is too probable, with respect to the gentleman I am writing of, that a long and

faithful discharge of the duties of his office, will be almost forgotten, while the hours of his frailty, or, to speak stronger, the periods of his vice and folly, will be clearly remembered, and distinctly related. I think, and hope, I shall never forget him. Went to Wentworth's, lodgings—looked into a gentlemen's Magazine for 1793—supped with him, and Mrs. W.—the fruits of our afternoon's labour, making part of it—Took leave of them a little after eleven, went home, and to bed—before I put out my candle, read some pages in the "Monthly Review," for last month."

Poor Cooke! how clearly he saw the image of himself, in the unhappy clergyman, and predicted, what he feared, would be his own posthumous fame. We have heard, and read much of fascination, when the victim sees the ruin that awaits him, yet has no power to turn from it; but gazes, shudders, and is lost.

August 15th, my hero was employed in a long and solitary walk, from Buxton, through the adjoining villages, and over hills and dales, rambling from 6 o'clock in the morning, until 7 in the evening; and I would willingly publish the account of the walk, as an honourable specimen of his talents for de-

scription, but that I know, to the generality of readers, it could afford little entertainment, and to some would appear out of place.

On the 18th of September, 1794, Mr. Cooke sent off his baggage to Chester, and proceeded himself on horse-back to Macclesfield. He passed the evening at his friend Slater's, with a party, and did, what he says, "no party could ever prevail upon me to do before; recited two speeches from Shakspeare."

He remained at Macclesfield the next day, and on the 20th his journal ceases.

From the list of characters before given, it appears that he did not, at this time and place, play those characters on which his fame as an actor in a great measure depends. We see nothing of any of the great characters of Shakspeare, or of Macklin's Sir Pertinax McSycophant, or even Sir Archy Mc Sarcasm; for though the farce of Love-a-la-Mode, is played, he acts Sir Callaghan O'Brallaghan. Jaques, in "As you like it," and Hotspur, in "Henry IVth," are the only two of Shakspeare's characters, mentioned as being played by him at Buxton. We know, however, that he had played Lear, and Richard, previous to this period.

"Early in the month of November, in the year 1794," says he, "I embarked at Holyhead for Dublin, having been engaged early in the summer for that theatre by Mr. Hitchcock. As soon as I landed, I was introduced to the manager, Richard Daley, Esq. and dined with him, and some of his friends, at his apartment in the theatre; and now commenced a new date in my theatricals."

Till the age of thirty-eight, with talents of the first and brightest order, George Frederick Cooke, had remained in comparative obscurity, and had never trod the stage of any thing like a metropolitan theatre. The theatres of Manchester and Liverpool were, at the periods I have been speaking of, but small and paltry establishments, compared to what they now are, and their audiences proportionably deficient in taste and respectability. This is a strong proof of Mr. Cooke's want of proper ambition, owing to the unhappy habits he had acquired.

As Mr. Cooke's attachment, to what he called conviviality, had been established before this time, I doubt not that his dinner with the Irish manager, was a roaring setto, a full and convincing proof of what is called Irish hospitality, and English good-fellowship.

CHAP. V.

Mr. Cooke the hero of the Dublin stage—Miss Campion—Mr. Matthews—Cooke, Matthews, and Mrs. Burns—Cooke quits Dublin, and the stage—enlists as a soldier—his discharge procured by Messrs. Banke and Ward—further distress—is relieved and sent to Manchester.

MR. COOKE, now thirty-eight years of age, and having been seventeen years a player, during many of which he stood forward as the hero of the provincial theatres of England, was an object of attraction and delight to the warm-hearted sons of St. Patrick. He took possession of the Dublin stage without a struggle. There was no competitor; the throne was his own.

On Wednesday the nineteenth of November, 1794, he made his first appearance in Dublin. The character he then played was Othello. Mr. Daley played Iago, and Miss Campion Desdemona. This lady married Mr. Pope, and died in 1803, having been taken ill while playing this same character, for Mr. Cooper's benefit, at Drury-Lane, when Mr. Cooke played Iago.

Most of the great characters of tragedy, such as Macbeth, Richard, Othello, Zanga, Shylock, and many others, with many first parts in comedy, were filled this season by Mr. Cooke, who complains in his journal, of the want of ability, as well as discipline, in Mr. Daly's corps. "While I was in the Dublin theatre," says he, "the celebrated personage, known by the name of the Chevalier D'Eon, used sometimes to fence at the end of the play, dressed as an officer of dragoons. The Dublin theatre was at that time at a low ebb; the performers were ill paid, and the house, scenes, and dresses, very mean and bad. On the second or third of March, 1795, I quitted the theatre; I was heartily sick of it, and being appointed to act Don Felix in the Wonder, and no dress provided, I embraced the opportunity of taking my leave. From this period, until March, 1796, I ceased to be an actor."

It is but too evident, that the cause here assigned, was not sufficient of itself, to produce the effect recorded. The truth is, that Mr. Cooke's want of prudence, and common sense, in the common transactions of life, drove him at this time from the stage. Intemperance, which long before had be-

become a habit with him, and which tarnished his fame as an actor, marred his usefulness as a man, and finally, produced as its inevitable effect, disease and death, was the cause of a series of actions, during the twelve months now under consideration, which will scarcely appear credible to those who are not used to contemplate the romances of real life; romances much more strange than those of fiction, if we except the old and new tales of ghosts, and dragons, and giants, and certainly full as instructive Let the picture of genius, degraded by weakness, and brought to shame, poverty, disease, and the brink of the grave, make its due impression.

The causes which removed Mr. Cooke from before the public in this instance, I am enabled to state, as well as the circumstances which brought him back to the stage at the time he has mentioned.

Mr. Matthews, now and for some years, a distinguished favourite with the London audience, at that time a very young man and actor, was a member of Daly's company, and lodged in the same house with Cooke. One night after play and farce, in the latter Matthews having played Mordecai to Cooke's Sir Archy, and to the satisfaction of the veteran,

was invited by him to take supper in his room *tête-a-tête*, and drink whiskey punch. This high honour was gratefully received and accepted by the young comedian, who anticipated both pleasure and instruction, from the society of the celebrated actor. Supper over, and Cooke's spirits elevated, the fatigues of the evening were forgotten; he was pleased with his young companion, whose tongue, freed from all shackles by the smoking liquor, glibly poured forth those praises which Cooke's superior talents prompted. One jug of whiskey punch was quickly emptied, and while drinking the second, George Frederick in his turn begins to commend young Matthews.

"You are young, and want some one to advise and guide you; take my word for it, there is nothing like industry and sobriety—Mrs. Burns! Another jug of whiskey punch, Mrs. Burns—you make it so good, Mrs. Burns, another jug."

"Yes, Mister Cooke."

"In our profession, my young friend, dissipation is too apt to be the bane of youth—"Villanous company," low company, leads them from studying their business and acquiring that knowledge which alone can make them respectable."

Thus he proceeded drinking and uttering advice, (not the less valuable because in opposition to his own practice,) and assuring Matthews of his protection, instruction, and all his influence to forward his views, while the whiskey punch, jug after jug, vanished, and with it all semblance of the virtues so eloquently praised. Though maddened by the fumes of the liquor, the chain of his ideas continued still unbroken, and he began a dissertation on the Histrionic art, proceeding from first principles to a detail of the mode of exhibiting the passions, with a specimen of each by way of illustration.

It is impossible to describe, but the reader may perhaps imagine, the ludicrous effect of this scene. The power of the whiskey operating in diametric opposition to the will, on his strong and flexible features, produced contortions and distortions, of which he was insensible, while Matthews sat gazing with astonishment, and at times in an agony, from the effort to restrain his risible faculties; but to add to his torture, Cooke began to question him, after each "horrible face," as to the meaning of it, or the passion expressed. Matthews, totally in the dark as to *Cooke's meaning*, made every possible mistake; and when set right by

Cooke, excused himself by charging his stupidity on the whiskey.

"There—what's that?"

"Very fine, Sir."

"But *what* is it?"

"O—anger—anger, to be sure."

"To be sure you're a blockhead—Fear! fear, Sir!"

But when the actor, after making a hideous face, compounded of satanic malignity and the brutal leering of a drunken satyr, told his pupil that *that* was *love*, poor Matthews could resist no longer, but roared with convulsive laughter.

Cooke was surprised and enraged at this rudeness in his young guest, but Matthews had address enough to pacify him.

Mistress Burns, in the mean time, had protested against making any more whiskey punch, and had brought up the last jug, upon Cooke's solemn promise that he would ask for no more. The jug is finished; and Matthews, heartily tired, thinks he shall escape from his tormentor, and makes a move to go.

"Not yet, my dear boy, one jug more."

"It's very late, Sir."

"Only one more."

"Mistress Burns will not let us have it."

"Won't she? I'll show you that presently."

Cooke thunders with his foot, and vociferates repeatedly "Mistress Burns!" At length honest Mrs. Burns, who had got to bed, in hopes of rest, in the chamber immediately under them, answers,

"What is it you want, Mister Cooke?"

"Another jug of whiskey punch, Mistress Burns."

"Indeed, but you can have no more, Mister Cooke."

"Indeed but I will, Mistress Burns."

"Remember your promise, Mister Cooke."

"Another jug of punch, Mistress Burns."

"Indeed, and I will not get out of my own bed any more at all, Mister Cooke, and so there's an end of it!"

"We'll see that, Mistress Burns."

When, to Matthews's further astonishment, he seized the jug and smashed it on the floor over the head of *Mistress Burns*, exclaiming, "Do you hear that, Mistress Burns?"

"Yes I do, Mister Cooke."

He then proceeded to break the chairs, one by one, after each exclaiming, "Do you hear that, Mrs. Burns?" and receiving in reply,

"Yes I do, Mister Cooke, and you'll be very sorry for it to-morrow, so you will."

He then opened the window, and very deli

berately proceeded to throw the looking-glasses into the street, and the fragments of broken tables and chairs. Matthews had made several attempts to go, and had been detained by Cooke, he now ventured something like an expostulation; on which his Mentor ordered him out of his apartment, and threw the candle and candlestick after him. Matthews, having departed, the wretched madman sallied out, and was brought home next day, beaten and deformed with bruises.

The disgrace attending the notoriety of this transaction, drove him on to further mad intemperance: the stage was abandoned, and in a fit of drunkenness and despair, he enlisted as a private, in a regiment destined for the West-Indies.

A fit of sickness prevented his embarking with his regiment; yet, though in England, he remained until the year 1796, altogether lost. At this period, Mr. Maxwell, manager of the Portsmouth theatre, being at Southampton, was accosted by a soldier, who called him by name, and whom he recognized to be George Frederick Cooke. He wished for his discharge, and requested the interference of Mr. Maxwell. This was promised, and it was agreed, that Maxwell should apply to Banks and Ward, the Manchester managers, to assist

him, and they parted. On application to Banks and Ward, they undertook the business, and Maxwell heard no more of it for some weeks, when a boy came to him at his theatre in Portsmouth, and addressed him, with "a poor sick man, Sir, who has been a soldier, is now at my mother's, and begs to see you before he dies." He went to a miserable public house, and there found George Frederick Cooke, in a state of the most abject misery. It proved, on examination, that Banks and Ward had procured his discharge, and sent him money to pay his way to them at Manchester; but the money was spent, or thrown away, sickness ensued, he was ashamed to apply to them again. He had crawled from Southampton to Portsmouth, to see Maxwell, and had sunk exhausted on his arrival at this public house. Maxwell had him taken care of, sent him clothes and a physician, and wrote again to Banks and Ward. After his recovery, by desire of the Manchester managers, Mr. Maxwell paid his passage by the mail to London, and sent him thither with just money enough to pay his expenses. At London, a friend of Banks and Ward was appointed to receive and forward him by mail to Manchester; but notwithstanding all their precautions, he

did not reach his friends until after the time he had appointed. He stopped on the road between London and Manchester, for another taste of his beloved madness, while the managers had to disappoint a great concourse of people, who crowded the theatre to witness his return. He however safely arrived, and played Octavian in the Mountaineers. His re-appearance was greeted by a numerous audience, with the most enthusiastic applause.

The reader will remember a blank in the memoirs of our hero, of twenty months, from February, 1780, to October, 1781. From the strange, and almost incredible, manner in which we find him employed, during this second absence from the boards, imagination is stimulated to conjecture, where, and what, he was, during the twenty months of his first absence. He has many times asserted, that he was in the British army which attempted to subjugate the United States. He has stated, over the bottle, the regiment he served in, and the actions in which he fought, as will be further noticed, when I come to that portion of his life, during which he was the theatrical magnet of the Western hemisphere. It is to be noticed, however, that it was only over the bottle, or under its influence, that he mentioned his having served in this coun-

try. The low station he was in, might be a sufficient reason for his *sober* silence; for he certainly never mentioned the transactions I have just recorded. I have no means at this distant period of ascertaining the truth, but his absence from before the public, at the period treated of in this chapter, in some measure corroborates those tales of his, which would otherwise have only passed for bacchanalian romances.

CHAP. VI.

Mr. Cooke at Manchester, Lancaster, Preston, &c.—George Colman, the younger—Mr. H. Johnston—Mr. H. Siddons—Mr. Cooke's marraige announced—Goes to Dublin, 1797*—Plays with Mr. Kemble—Mr. Bannister—Remarks on Ben Jonson's plays—Tate Wilkinson—Cooke's pecuniary difficulties—Goes to Cork—reflections on servants—Comparison between the gambler and drunkard—Journey to Limerick—Dublin—Green-room behaviour—Kearney's—Cooke's reflections on his intemperance, and the bad company he associates with—Characters he played at this time—His reading and remarks.*

ON Friday, the seventeenth of March, 1796, did our hero, after playing the madman in real life for a year, make his appearance at Manchester, as a representative of madness

in Octavian, a character very little suited to his talents, in the latter part of his life, though I find that he used frequently to play it in the provincial theatres, before he came to London.

During passion-week, he received an invitation from Mr. John Stanton, manager of the Lancaster theatre, to play at that place, which he accepted. Miss Smith, since of Covent Garden, was then a promising young actress in Mr. Stanton's company. After playing at Chester, Lancaster, Preston, and Buxton, Mr. Cooke went to Shrewsbury, Messrs. Banks and Ward, having added that theatre to their other two. While the company was at Shrewsbury, he went to Liverpool, to play for the benefit of Mr. Banks, and performed Sir Edward Mortimer, in the Iron Chest.

This is the second time since commencing this chapter, that mention of the productions of George Colman, the younger, has occurred. In a work of this kind, it will perhaps not be unacceptable to notice this eccentric genius, who stands unrivalled among the English dramatists of the last twenty years, and who, like the immediate subject of these memoirs, has most industriously striven to mar the high endowments, with which nature had blest him. Involved in debt by an utter want

of prudence, that unfashionable, ungentlemanly quality, without which no man's honesty has any solid security, he has been kept from extreme poverty, by withholding from his creditors the property his father bequeathed him in the Hay-market theatre, and living, and occasionally writing, within the rules of the king's bench. In his last *jeu d'esprit*, he thus jokes upon what, in the usual cant, is called a man's misfortune, that is, the effects of his vices.—

Yet though my childhood felt disease,
Though my lank purse unwol'n by fees,
Some ragged muse has netted;
Still, honest Chronos! 'tis most true,
To thee, (and faith to others too!)
I'm very much indebted.

This is in the "Reckoning with Time;" and in "The Two Parsons,"

If men of large estate, then we retrench;
But if we are in all respects,
Mere simple debtors, sans effects,
Hoping that Plutus may not always frown,
We then, as calmly as we can, sit down,
The king, (heaven bless him!) finding us a bench.

This gentleman, after the usual education bestowed upon those who are intended for the learned professions, was sent by his father to the temple, to read law; but, as he tells us, he preferred reading plays. At his father's theatre he produced, in 1784, a comic opera, or comedy in three acts, with songs,

called "*Two to one.*" This piece the writer saw with great delight, as it was the first he had ever seen in London. Mr. John Palmer spoke the prologue, of which he only remembers one line.

"And Dunce the second, follows Dunce the first."

To this piece succeeded *Turk and no Turk; Inkle and Yarico;* and *Ways and Means;* he then changed his style, and gave the public, *The Battle of Hexham; Surrender of Calais, Mountaineers,* and *Iron Chest.* This last piece occasioned a quarrel between the author and Mr. Kemble, and the quarrel occasioned a preface to the piece, of much more worth than itself. Again he changed his style, and produced *The Heir at Law, Poor Gentleman,* and *John Bull,* and some of the best farces the English stage possesses. It is said of his best comedy, *John Bull,* that he wrote the last act, when pressed for money, (and after long disappointing Mr. Harris, who had the other four,) the whole in one night, drinking gin and water, and throwing the paper on the floor as he filled each sheet; when the comedy, the gin, and the night ended, he tumbled into bed, and dropt the curtain.

This digression, the reader will perhaps recollect, was occasioned by mentioning Mr.

Cooke's performance of Sir Edward Mortimer, in the Iron Chest, for Mr. Banks's benefit at Liverpool, 1796. At that time and place, Mr. H. Johnston played Wilford.

This gentleman is by birth a Scotchman. He was early distinguished in the North, by the appellation of the Scotch Roscius, and by indiscriminate praise, all his boyish faults are fixed upon his years of maturity, and he has became an actor of trick and habit. Yet is Mr. Johnston above the level of ordinary tragedians, and in characters of vehemence draws forth the applause of his most critical auditors.

From Shrewsbury, Mr. Cooke went to Chester, and from thence to Manchester. After Manchester races, he went for a few nights to Macclesfield in Cheshire, from thence to Huddersfield in Yorkshire, to Mr. Stanton, and with his company to Preston.

His journal specifies the time of his being at the latter place, to be the last of July, and the beginning of August, 1796. "Preston in Lancashire is a handsome town of some size, standing on the river Ribble. It is 216 miles from London, 32 from Manchester, and 33 from Liverpool." The theatre was under the management of Mr. Stanton.

At this time and place, Mr. Cooke stu-

died and played Penruddock, in Mr. Cumberland's comedy of "the Wheel of Fortune." For Mr. Stanton's night, he "went on," as he calls it, "for Tangent in *The way to get Married*:" the observations he makes on this occasion, are worth the attention of players.

"I never studied the character of Tangent, but from a few readings retained the words, and the business from playing Capt. Falkner three or four times, and seeing it once in London, where it was excellently acted. Many of those who performed with me were not only imperfect in the words, but very ignorant of the character. It is common for many on the stage, to say they have *studied* a character, when they even know not what the expression means; their *utmost* idea of studying, being, to obtain a knowledge of the author's words. In all ranks and professions, there are doubtless many, whose genius or abilities are not suited to the situation in which they move, and the stage certainly has a great share. It is grievous to behold the higher classes of society represented in a play, by those whose utmost stretch of abilities, does not qualify them to appear as their attendants. There are actors and actresses, and some of them in what are called respectable situations, who are not only destitute of the embellishments of edu-

cation, but are absolutely incapable of reading their native language. This will ever be the case, while the drama remains in its present unprotected state: the opinion of a great part of mankind, being, that after a person has failed, in every attempt they have made in life, even as mechanics and servants, the stage is still open as a last and sure resourse. And such is the petty and absurd ambition of some, that for the sake of strutting their hour before the public, they will starve in little itinerant companies, rather than acquire a decent subsistence, by following the employments they were bred to."

What Mr. Cooke says, as to the general mode of study, and the ideas of those called actors generally on the subject, is perfectly true; but such people never become actors. What he means by the unprotected state of the drama, I know not. Actors, like other men, are estimated by their attainments, their talents, and their virtues; and I have generally found, that the world has been ready to appreciate the former, full as high as they deserve, and to dispense with the latter, in much too great a degree.

Mr. Cooke's remarks on the play of "The Way to get Married," are judicious; but as

they extend to some pages, and the play will soon be forgotten, I shall not transcribe them. He condemns it as unnatural, and in one part immoral.

On the 6th of August, my hero left Preston, and proceeded with Mr. Stanton to Lancaster, a distance of about 22 miles.

In this town, Mr. H. Siddons joined the company. This gentleman is the son of Mrs. Siddons, and therefore he is suffered to pass for a tragedian. He is uniformly spoken of, as a man of sense and probity; and depend upon it, gentle reader, that is high praise.

From Lancaster Mr. Cooke repaired again to Buxton, and by his journal I find him on the 4th of September, employed in *cutting* G. Colman's "Iron Chest" to suit the poverty of the Buxton company.

His remarks on this occasion are entitled to notice. "This play was first represented last March, at Drury-Lane, but after two or three nights' performance, was laid aside. Last July Mr. Colman published it, as represented the first night, and in a long, well written, but severe preface, imputes the miscarriage of the piece chiefly to Mr. John Kemble's conduct, or rather misconduct, as acting manager and principal performer. The alle-

gations are strong and pointed, and as I believe have remained unanswered by Mr. Kemble. The play has been reproduced, a few days ago, at the Hay-Market theatre, with much better success; but whether it will remain a standing dish, is yet to be decided. It is written upon the same plan as the "Mountaineers," &c. &c. with chorusses and songs, which, without doubt, have a pleasing effect; but, I think, cause Mr. C.'s plays to bear too striking a resemblance to each other; and conveys strongly the idea of the author's borrowing from himself. In all his serious parts, and in some comic ones, he has endeavoured to imitate the manner and language of Shakspeare, with what success I will not presume to say. Half sentences, phrases, and expressions, are certainly, and not improperly, borrowed from him. The piece ends imperfectly, not to say badly; for after the audience have been kept in a strong suspense during the greater part of the last act, the hero's fate is left undecided, with a very small appearance of poetic justice; and the catastrophe is huddled together, because the fable *could go no further*. I think the author's attachment to his favourite plan of writing has biassed his judgment, and enfeebled his execution; and I am satisfied, had he selected the subject

for a 5 act tragedy, his success would have been beyond what it can be in the present shape, let him bestow what alterations he pleases on it."

Mr. Colman did alter his plan in writing comedy, and his success in the "Heir at Law;" "Poor Gentleman;" and "John Bull," was the consequence. He afterwards returned to the old form in "The Africans," and justified Cooke's judgment, by sinking his reputation, and appearing more than ever to borrow from himself.

Mr. Cooke continues his reading much as before, at Buxton. Indeed he seems, notwithstanding the Angel, and the Red Lion, and the Grove, and the Brown Bear, and the Swan, and the Bull's Head, to read more here than at any other place. While perusing "Miscellaneous Works of Edward Gibbon," he laments his want of knowledge in the French language; and adds, "I am determined to gain a knowledge of it, as far as will answer my purpose. I was, when a school-boy, under an *English* French teacher, and within these 4 or 5 years under a Frenchman for some time, but to very little purpose."

In this year, (1796) was announced the marriage of Mr. Cooke to Miss Daniels, both of Chester theatre.

"In September, 1797," says Mr. Cooke, "I left Lancaster, and went to Whitehaven, in which town and Ulverstone I remained until in the following month I embarked for Dublin, but owing to rough weather landed at Waterford. A part of the Dublin company was then acting at that place. I remained five days, and then set forward for the Metropolis. I arrived the last day of October, and was next day introduced to Frederick Edward Jones, Esq. the new manager, who had presided in a private theatrical corps of gentlemen—the ladies were *Actresses*."

Mr. Cooke had a sovereign contempt for private theatricals, and used to relate a story in point of Garrick. The English Roscius having been invited to see a play performed by Lords, Knights, honourables, and Ladies, he with all the delicacy of a gentleman, sate, not only patiently, but expressed his approbation to the nobility and gentry who surrounded and attentively observed him. It was, "very well," "very well," "Ah! very well, indeed," "very fair," &c. At length, in a subordinate character of the piece, all the great parts having been duly distributed to the great folks, a provincial actor, unknown to Garrick, made his appearance, who had been

hired as a kind of drill sergeant. As soon as Roscius saw him and heard him speak, his eye was fixed, and without thinking of the inference, he exclaimed, "Ah ha! I see they have got an actor among them." Some of my readers will recall to mind certain actors they have seen, and then perhaps exclaim, "these Lords, Gentlemen, and Ladies, must have been very bad."

On the twentieth of November our hero opened for the second time in Dublin, in the character of Iago. This is the first time I find mention of his playing that character, which was ever after one of his most shining parts. The Dublin company played at this time in Fishamble-street. Some weeks after, the new Theatre Royal, Crow-street, was opened. It was well fitted up, the proscenium splendid, the scenery and wardrobe new and elegant. Mr. Cooke spoke an occasional address, written by Joseph Atkinson, Esq. and afterwards played Shylock.

The struggle of the Irish to obtain their freedom, which commenced the twenty-third of May, 1798, caused the shutting up of the theatre for six weeks. "When the theatre opened again," says Mr. Cooke, "we performed a few nights to thin audiences. We were obliged to have every thing over by

nine o'clock. In the month of September we went to Cork, from thence to Limerick. I can't say, with Sam Foote, that I never was at Cork, but I think I can say that I have seen as many drawings of it as he ever did. The first season of Mr. Jones's management, Mr. Bellamy, now of Covent Garden, was appointed acting manager, a situation for which he was totally unqualified. Before we left Dublin, Mr. Jones did me the honour to appoint me his deputy. I speedily resigned." To those who knew Mr. Cooke, the idea of his being the superintendent, and occasional director, of the business of a theatre, is the most *outré* that can enter the imagination.

During our hero's engagement with Mr. Jones, he played the Stranger with great applause. The second summer of this engagement, Mr. Kemble visited Ireland, and Cooke, who so soon afterwards shook his throne in the metropolis, played the Ghost, to his Hamlet; Henry, to his Richard; the Bastard, to his Lear; and Austin, to his Count of Narbonne.

A performer, who was at this time one of Mr. Jones's company, has related to me the following characteristic anecdote, which he witnessed, on the night of the performance last mentioned.

While Mr. Cooke was waiting at the side-scene for his cue to go on, Kemble came up and reproached him thus:

"Mr. Cooke, you distressed me exceedingly in my last scene—I could scarcely get on—you did not give me the cue more than once—you were very imperfect."

"Sir, I was perfect."

"Excuse me, Sir, you were not."

"By—— I was, Sir!"

"You were not, Sir!"

"I'll tell you what, I'll not have your faults fathered upon me! And damn me, black Jack, if I don't make you tremble in your pumps one of these days yet!"

About this time, Mrs. Cooke, formerly Miss Daniels, who had been engaged as a first singer in the Dublin theatre, suddenly took leave of the manager and her loving lord, and returned to England.

Incledon, Munden, and Bannister, were occasional players in Dublin this season. Incledon continued to be Mr. Cooke's intimate, until he left England. Munden, was an old acquaintance. Of Mr. Bannister, I will take this opportunity of speaking, as I think him one of the brightest ornaments of the English stage.

His father, Mr. Charles Bannister, was, in 1784—5—6 and 7, one of the principal singers of the London theatres, and the best actor I ever saw among the singers, with the exception of Irish Johnstone. Mr. John Bannister, his son, was at this same time the delight of the public at the Hay-market, and Drury-Lane. I saw both father and son for the first time, in Colman the younger's "Two to One." For humour, whim, jollity, and that hearty expression, which is felt instantaneously by an audience, when the actor, like Mr. Bannister, appears to be unconscious of the presence of an audience, this gentleman has no equal. To an American reader, I can convey some idea of him, by mentioning Mr. John E. Harwood; but it must be Mr. Harwood divested of his fat, and his indolence, exerting those superior talents with which nature had endowed him, and that genuine humour which made him the delight of his associates. Mr. Bannister's versatility, and natural personification of every species of character, in the comedy of middling and low life, place him above all the comedians of his time.

Ireland was by no means a favourable situation for a man of George Frederick's propensities. His first visit, as we have seen.

ended in misery and disgrace; and this second, though it continued long, and ended happily, neither improved him as an actor, nor as a man. I have copious journals, kept by him at intervals, from the last of July, 1798, to the end of February, 1800, from which I will make such records and extracts, as shall tend faithfully to elucidate his extraordinary character, and the subsequent events of his life.

In August, 1798, I find in his diary the following excellent remarks upon the plays of Ben Jonson. He had been reading, "the tragedy of Cataline, his conspiracy." He says, "Among the plays of Jonson, the only one ranked on the stock-list of the present day, is "Every Man in his Humour;" and that is very seldom acted. There are few companies in which the characters can be cast to advantage, as, notwithstanding the wit and humour are obsolete, they are drawn in a masterly manner, and not as in many modern productions, one or two characters taken pains with, to suit particular performers, and the remainder left, as unworthy of attention. I think by this practice, some actors now living have been spoiled, as the authors have nourished their faults; indeed, the audiences deserve a large share of the blame. I re-

member, with pleasure and satisfaction, Mr. Garrick's exquisite performance of *Kitely*. I had before seen him act Don Felix, but, though the passion of jealousy is the predominant spring of each character, the representation of it in the Spanish Grandee, and the English Trader, was extremely opposite. I have seen actors, and "heard others praise them too," in whom the same passion was alike in all characters. Mr. Garrick's powers of discrimination were astonishing, but "take him for all and all," &c. The Alchymist quitted the stage with Mr. Garrick. Several years ago, a farce called "The Tobacconist," was extracted from it, in which the late Mr. Thomas Weston gained great approbation in Abel Drugger. "Epicene, or the Silent Woman," and "Volpone, or the Fox," have been played in my remembrance, in London, but I never saw them. In "Cataline," the author has closely adhered to the Roman writers, *Sallust*, *Plut. in Cic.* &c. The language is nervous and correct, the plot clearly, but hastily carried on, yet the play would require great alterations for the present stage, and a classical audience to witness it. Otway, in his "Venice Preserved," alludes to the principal characters, and seems to have made some use of the play."

At the time of playing Kitely in London, Mr. Cooke made some further remarks on "Every Man in his Humour," which the reader will find in a journal kept by him at that period.

In one of his moralizing moods, he writes thus: "Sir R. Steel recommends the perusal of a moral tale or story, in the morning, to settle the mind, and prepare it for the business or vicissitudes of the day. A friend of mine recommended to me, above twenty years ago, to take a quarter of an hour's consideration every morning, to regulate the affairs, and arrange, as far as I could, the transactions intended, or expected, for the day. I am sorry to say, I have very seldom availed myself of this advice; if I had, I am fully persuaded I should have avoided many disagreeable and dangerous circumstances, which have perplexed and embittered a great part of my life. So small a space of time as a quarter of an hour, may be taken from the most urgent calls, and when we consider that in the course of a year, even by this trifling allotment, three whole days, nineteen hours and a quarter, would be devoted to thought and reflection, it ought to be a strong incitement to the practice; as multitudes

pass a long and busy life, without appropriating even this inconsiderable space, to so useful and necessary a duty as thought."

Reading in Tate Wilkinson's Memoirs, suggests the following remarks: "This is as strange an animal as ever trod the boards. His Memoirs are contained in 4 vols. (which I well remember cost me twelve shillings,) but what really appertains to himself, might be contained in one, and would scarce be worth reading; but they contain many anecdotes, &c. which will add to the history of the British theatres for a few years. He has since published another incoherent jumble, called "The Wandering Patentee," which is a kind of journal of the York theatre. From his talents of mimicry, he was enabled to copy many characters in a pleasing manner, particularly those of Mr. Foote's writing; and his acquaintance with the London theatres, and the actors and actresses of Garrick's days, makes him an excellent manager for young performers. His theatres are on a respectable footing, and his conduct, as a manager, very honourable. I was with him a few months in the year 1786 and 1787. I speak of him as he was, for I am given to understand that he has left off acting, but it would not surprise

me to hear that he, if able, has again resumed both sock and buskin.

The rebellion was a cause of great distress to the Irish manager and his company at this time. The salaries appear to have been badly and irregularly paid, and insubordination among the performers is always the consequence. My hero's credit appears to have been in bad state, except with Mr. Jones, who about this period, appointed him his deputy. Cooke, after mentioning an arrest by his butcher, from which he was relieved by giving bail, and paying *1l. 7s. 8d. Irish*, expenses, goes on to lament his situation:

"In the whole of my theatrical life, and I have had my share of ill-fortune, I never was placed in a more painful and uncertain predicament. Suspense, of all things, is certainly the worst to be endured. A civil but pressing creditor, has just called in. Oh, the misery of being in debt. How I am to set out on my journey, (to Cork,) I mean with respect to settling accounts in Dublin, I know not."

I find no allusion to the adventures of 1795 and 1796, in any of his manuscripts, except the following passage in his diary of August 29th, 1798. At a public house, "an

old military acquaintance came in; we had some conversation; without discovering myself, I sent a small present to his wife."

On Friday the 14th of September, 1798, my hero arrived at Cork. How he satisfied his Dublin creditors, or whether, like some other heroes, he left them unsatisfied, and showed his generalship in his retreat, I know not. He begins his Cork journal on Sunday, September 16, and I will make an extract which is truly characteristic.

"Much indisposed. I plainly perceive, that I must strictly adhere to the careful and temperate plan I have laid down, or my health will be very soon impaired. After musing some time, sat down to commence writing memorandums for a diary, which, if possible, I intend to continue for a year. I have a particular reason for beginning it on this day, which I may perhaps hereafter mention.—Chancing to look out at the window, Joe, the caller of the theatre, was passing; I desired him to come up, without having any business with him. Joe, who is a kind of male gossip, had I shown the least disposition to listen, would have entertained me with stories until midnight: but after a short time perceiving me indifferent and inattentive, took his leave.

I could not help thinking there was something strange and capricious in my manner, not to say absurd and saucy. Calling a man up, merely to ask a few insignificant questions, and then appearing to be tired of his conversation. Had any person of a superior station in life to myself, served me so, how should I have felt! It would very likely have soured my temper, and sent me home dissatisfied for the evening. If we would sometimes place ourselves in the situation of our inferiors, they would not so often have justice on their side, when they complain of our conduct towards them. I have several times, particularly in this kingdom, been shocked, and disgusted, at the behaviour of many whom I have had occasion to observe, for their arrogant and cruel behaviour to servants; and often for no other reason, (if I may so use word,) but because they *were* servants."

On the evening of September 17th, he played for the first time in Cork. The character Shylock. Supped with a party after the play; "returned to the Hotel about a quarter before one," says he. "To go to the room I occupied, I had to pass through another, and an officer, who had been shown into the outer

room, had so barricadoed the door within, that there was no forcing an entrance, and he slept so sound, that our efforts to awake him were ineffectual. While the chamber-maid was preparing another room, I stood by the kitchen fire, and the rats frisked around me like young kittens."

The next day he removed to lodgings, boarding at another place, which he calls, "the Mess-room."

His principal correspondents at this time seem to be Mr. Williams, his Buxton friend, and Mr. Montagu, who quitted Mr. Jones's company in August, and went to Liverpool, and of whom Mr. Cooke speaks in warm terms, as an actor, a friend, and a man.—Complaining of his inability to write at certain times, he observes, "I am, at times, possessed with a certain restlessness of disposition, and an indecisive turn of mind, that prevents me from adhering to any one object, unless for a very short time. When these fits are on me, I feel, and am, perplexed, and nothing but a change of scene will banish them. I cannot exactly account for their intrusion, but observe I am chiefly visited by them when affairs or business are a little embarrassed and unsettled."

Our hero continued in Cork, until the 30th of September, and appears to have adhered to his good resolutions, with a firmness truly praiseworthy. His time was divided between reading, exercise by walking, the business of the theatre, and the cheerful company at the Mess. Fielding's "Tom Jones," occupies a large portion of his reading-time, while at Cork; he says it was the third time of his perusing it, and expresses that admiration to which it is entitled. His characters here were Shylock, Stedfast, (Heir at Law,) Delaval, (He's Much to Blame,) Sir John Flowerdale, (Lionel and Clarissa,) and Sir William Dorillan. Having mentioned cards several times, as introduced at the Mess, Mr. Cooke explains, by saying, that there was no gambling, at the same time condemns himself, for having wasted his time so fruitlessly. "It will very little assist me in defending myself, to say that I have frequently wasted my time in a much worse manner. When a man reconciles himself to himself, by making degrees of sin, he is in the utmost danger of advancing to, instead of receding from, the most abominable depravity. It is a doubt with me, whether a gamester, (here I take the word in its utmost latitude.) or

drunkard, be the most vicious character, or the most dangerous to society. The former, without deranging his faculties, exerts them all for the avowed purpose of plundering every one he plays with; his dearest friends not excepted, (if such a wretch can have a friend,) and when, by superior villany, or some unforeseen chance, he is in his turn beggar'd, he is ready fitted for the most atrocious crimes, robbery, murder, or suicide. Drunkenness, in addition to the high degree of wickedness attached to it, has the melancholy and woeful effect of degrading the human beneath the brute creation. What confidence can be placed in those persons who are in the habit of rendering themselves incapable of rational exertion? A crime committed in this state, is aggravated by the state itself, and in this light both moral and religious law must view it. There have been many excellent arguments used against this beastly vice, and many exposures of its dreadful tendency, but none more strong, pointed, and convincing, than the following short story, I believe an oriental one. A young man was decreed by fate to commit one heinous crime. He was to have the choice of three; but inevitably must choose. It was left to

him to make his election, of parricide, incest, or drunkenness. He chose the last, got drunk, and committed the former two."

What might we not hope from this month passed at Cork? Good resolutions firmly adhered to, and a clear view of the ill effects, as well as enormous wickedness, of the practice formerly indulged in.

On Sunday, the 30th of September, the company removed from Cork to Limerick. An account of the journey, especially as it was performed *en masse*, will, I think, be an amusing novelty to the reader.

"About 5 in the morning," says Mr. Cooke, "Lee came into my room to rouse me. Soon after Rawlins called; I arose, packed my trunk, and went to Mrs. Garvey's lodgings, and about 6, she, with Rawlins and myself, set out in a post chaise for Limerick. Mr. and Mrs. Addison and Mrs. King were in another, and Fullam, with Mrs. Blanchard and Mrs. De Volney, in a third. The whole company were on the road in some travelling manner. At Mallow, (14 miles,) we stopped to breakfast. King, with Mrs. and Miss Day, was there before us; Mr. Addison's party and mine joined them. We had passed the extensive ruins of an Abbey, and at a

small distance those of a Castle; and while breakfast was preparing, Addison and I went to view the remains of a large building, which lay upon our right as we entered the town. Although Sunday, it seemed to be a market-day, as the town was very full, and there were several articles exposed to sale in the streets. Mrs. Garvey informed us, that in many small towns in Ireland, after morning service in the Chapel, a market was opened for the accommodation of the country people who were collected from the various parts adjacent. While we were at breakfast, a part of the Dorsetshire militia marched into the town. We proceeded on our journey 5 miles further, to the town of Buttevant, where Mr. Addison and myself, followed by several others, went to view the remains of a once magnificent Abbey, which an old woman, who attended us, said was dedicated to St. Francis. The remains of the building give an idea of its great extent and former importance. Several altars are still in good preservation, which are much resorted to by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. We saw two or three empty coffins, which our conductress informed us were used to convey the bodies of certain devotees

to the Abbey, who were permitted to be attired in the habit of St. Francis, and in that case are always interred without a coffin, the *blessed habit*, as the old woman styled it, being deemed a sufficient covering. Having returned to our companions, we proceeded 9 miles further to Charleville, where we were to remain for the night. The town was full of military, as indeed was every place between Cork and Limerick." After describing the difficulty of obtaining lodgings, the females being all *accommodated* with two beds, and the males with none, he the next morning proceeds; "After a disagreeable and almost sleepless night, between 5 and 6 o'clock in the morning, we proceeded to Kilmallock, in the same order as we had travelled the day before. At the end of 5 miles we reached this town, which, from the many ancient ruins, seems once to have been a place of strength and grandeur. We entered at one gateway, and proceeded along a street, terminated by another. As it rained, we did not alight. Three miles further, we reached Bruff, at the entrance of which we met a part of the Louth militia, with their baggage, &c. Here we breakfasted in a dirty incommodious Inn; indeed the whole place

seemed very filthy. Twelve miles more of good road and pleasant country brought us to Limerick."

Here they found, that, by military proclamation, no person was allowed to be in the streets after ten o'clock at night, and they met with some difficulty in procuring a guard, without which protection they could not have played, otherwise than in constant danger of interruption. However, all difficulties were overcome, and our hero made his first appearance at Limerick, as at Cork, in Shylock.

How long he remained at Limerick, Mr. Cooke does not tell us, and I have no particulars respecting his conduct, public or private, until the thirty-first of December, 1799, at which time he began another journal in Dublin, and continued it to the end of February, 1800.

The first passage I shall notice, is Mr. Cooke's remarks on green-room conduct and conversation. "It is very rare, that a green-room conversation is worth attending to; though one might imagine, from the profession of the persons who meet there, it would often be otherwise. During a representation in the evening, the strictest order

and decorum ought to be preserved, particularly when it is considered, how much the thoughts of those, who really understand their business, must be discomposed by the rude mirth and noisy talk which too often prevails there." On the evening of the day abovementioned, he played the Stranger for the third time. The play was very often repeated this season.

All those good resolves which had been made at Cork, and, what is much more extraordinary, adhered to, were now forgotten or despised. Indolence, dissipation, riot, and intoxication, seem to have been the order of the day. His place of resort was a public house kept by one Kearney. His friend Williams had left Buxton, and was now a member of the Dublin company. The names of some of his other companions are mentioned, but I presume they would not be pleased to find them here; although it would not be fair to infer that they promoted the evil we have to lament. A temporary suspension was put to a long continued series of ebriety by indisposition, and after a day and night of riotous excess, principally at Kearney's, he on the 6th of January, remained in bed until 6 in the evening, then went to the theatre, drank some

strong coffee, and played the Stranger. Complaints of misery, confusion of ideas, &c. succeed in his journal, and for some days the evil appears to be decreased, though "Kearney's" is far from abandoned.

This journal has more the air of confessions, than any of his other diaries; he records the hours spent in drunkenness, and recurs to reflections on the weakness of his conduct, making a disgusting medley of vileness and moralizing. He exclaims, with thousands in like circumstances, when suffering brings unavailing repentance, "Every inordinate cup is unblessed, and the ingredient is a devil." In a day or two after, I find he again "did not withdraw, until about four in the morning," and the next day he lies in bed until six in the evening, and then goes to the theatre to play.

I would not dwell upon this part of Mr. Cooke's life, if I did not hope that some one, not yet irretrievably lost and brutified, may be rescued from destruction, by the example here placed before him, of noble talents perverted to the shame and destruction of the possessor. Let the youth, who takes delight in the fellowship he finds at some "Kearney's," remember, that with talents far supe-

rior to his, Mr. Cooke could not, when he wished it, retrieve the moments he had mispent; and let him fly the temptation, before habit has strengthened its charms, and weakened his power of resistance.

Though in a great measure unavailing to himself, such reflections as the following, may be serviceable to others. "A day, or a night, or both, consumed in conviviality, (to speak softly,) is often the occasion of many succeeding days and nights being spent in the same manner. Few, when the mind is dissipated, thoughts confused, nerves unstrung, and the whole frame weakened and agitated, can put a sudden stop to the flowing evil. "To-morrow, I will return to my duty,"—To-morrow comes, and the ability to do well is lessened—and then to-morrow, and to-morrow, until some fortunate or unfortunate event closes the period. I will not, I cannot, at this time, touch upon the many instances, when a FATAL conclusion, by this rash, unthinking conduct, is put to fortune, reputation, and life."

I shall take leave of this disagreeable subject for the present, with the following extract from the diary.

"This day," January 19th, "I dined at Kearney's, where I remained until near daylight the next morning. The society, if I may profane the word, with whom I join at this place, is disgusting, to say no worse of it. Some individuals I could wish to select, and the time we might be together would, I believe, pass tolerably; but there are others it shocks me even to think of. It may seem strange, that I do not withdraw from it. Local convenience, and the foolish habit actors possess, of unaccountably associating with each other, though contrary to their judgment, must be my plea; however, I shall make my visits rare, and shorten their duration. As the morning was far advanced when I got home, and the voice of reason drowned, I did not go to bed, but sat until near ten o'clock, when I went to the Commercial Coffee-house, looked over the papers, breakfasted—called at the theatre—dined at the tavern—remained there until it was full time to go to business. Played "the Stranger," for the ninth time; felt weak and low, and in the last act very hoarse, or rather a failure of voice, from the preceding day and night's intemperance. I will not affront myself with any reflections upon the matter, as

it seems, if I may so express myself, to have the appearance of *self-hypocrisy*."

The following passages are so completely descriptive, and explanatory, of his conduct at times in New-York, that they must not be omitted.

"*Dublin, January 29th,*

"I was called this morning to the rehearsal of "Wives as they Were, and Maids as they Are." Having no "devotion to the deed," and being much unnerved, I sent word I could not attend either morning or evening. A little before one, Hamerton, (the deputy manager,) called; he seemed much indisposed, and assured me there was not any piece he could substitute that evening. I promised to play, and he left me."

This was no unfrequent thing with him. On such occasions, he would lie in bed all day, if not courted to get up and play that for which he was advertised; but if the manager, or some one he respected, would take the trouble of persuading him, he would generally comply. He goes on: "Arose—dined at home; went to the theatre, and played Sir William Doriland. My knee pained me, I was out of spirits, and also out of humour; but towards the conclusion of the play, the

natural acting of the charming little Bellamy, in Miss Doriland, roused me, and I was ashamed not to endeavour to second her in the best manner I was able." "To use a strange expression," says he, in another day's journalizing, "I am sometimes in a kind of *mental intoxication*. Some, I believe, would call it insanity. I believe it is allied to it. I then can imagine myself in strange situations, and in strange places. This humour, or whatever it is, comes uninvited, but is, nevertheless, easily dispelled; at least, generally so. When it *cannot* be dispelled, it must of course become madness."

These *mental intoxications*, it is needless to observe, were the consequence of *physical intoxications*, and it was in these humours, when he could "imagine himself in strange situations, and strange places," that he used, as I shall have occasion to mention, to indulge himself in a species of romancing, that might perhaps be termed, coherent madness.

The characters mentioned by Mr. Cooke, as having been played by him during this period, that is, from 31 of December, 1799, to the last of February, 1800, are as follows: The Stranger; Capt. Faulkner, (Way to get Married;) Capt. Ironsides, (Brothers;) Capt.

Bertram, (Birthday;) Baron Wildenheim, (Lover's Vows;) Loveless, (Trip to Scarborough;) Osmond, (Castle Spectre;) The King, (King and Miller;) Moody, (Country Girl;) Sir William Dorilan, (Wives, &c.) The Guardian; Haswell, (Such things Are;) Las Casas, (Pizarro;) Iago.

In this list we see but one of Shakspeare's characters. Richard the Third, not once played. Yet this is but a few months previous to his playing it at Covent Garden, and setting all the theatrical world in a blaze. Having been played by Mr Cooke in London, we shall see that it could not be repeated often enough, or sufficiently admired in the provinces.

An account of our hero's reading, during this residence in Dublin, with a few of his remarks thereon, and on plays and players, will bring us to a close of the present chapter. Pennant's tour in Scotland, in 1769; Johnson's tour to the Hebrides, and a tour from London, to Petersburg and Moscow, occupy a large portion of January. Goldsmith's "Animated Nature" next engages him; but the work most attended to, and remark-

"The complete Irish Traveller."

h of Ireland," says Mr. Cooke,

"nearest to the coast of Scotland, I observed that the names, manners, and customs, and for the most part, religion, of the inhabitants, is very similar to those of Scotland." Again where his author speaks of Dublin; "I know not what Jews the tourist might have met with, but I never saw above three or four in the city. The tourist gives as a sign of the poverty of the city, "the wretched harridans who ply for hire," and the "hawkers of news, and cleaners of shoes," he might have included the number of loathsome, disgusting, and importunate beggars, who assail you at every turn. Their appearance may be judged of, by what the late Sam Foote said of them. On his arrival at Dublin, he declared that "*he never till then, knew what the beggars in England did with their old clothes.*"

The following, I presume, is a picture of old Irish hospitality. "The meaning of the word *cosh*ering, is, that when a person visits a particular district, he is invited from one house to another, till the whole are gone through, the friends and relations of each family being invited to meet him, and the day of parting is the only day of grief or discontent." Again Mr. Cooke remarks upon the tourist: "Speaking of the

city of Limerick, he says, scarce a trace of its old walls, and 17 gates, are to be seen. Here I suspect compilation, for any person who had actually visited the city could scarcely have made so gross a mistake. I visited it last summer, and there are still very considerable remains of its ancient walls and fortifications. On and within many parts of the wall, the inhabitants have formed small pleasant gardens. Opposite Ryan's Inn, where I resided, the ruins of the wall, and the principal battery, used during the famous siege, are very visible."

After remarking with severity upon Mr. Lewis's Castle Spectre, he concludes thus: "I hope it will not be hereafter believed, that this play could attract crowded houses, when the most sublime production of the immortal Shakspeare, would be played to empty benches."

Speaking of the death of Mr. Lamash, he says, "He belonged to Drury-Lane in the time of Garrick; was the original Jessamy, in Bon Ton, and Trip, in the School for Scandal; and trifling as those parts may seem, his manner of playing them, was sufficient to stamp him as an actor. In the Fine Gentlemen, (such as fine gentlemen *were*,) he

stood unequalled by any actor I ever saw." He afterwards mentions, that he was to be buried at the expense of Mr. Jones, who had caused his salary to be paid regularly, during his illness.

Upon Mrs. Inchbald's comedy of "Wives as they Were, and Maids as they Are," he remarks: "The fable is in most places improbably conducted. The circumstance of Sir William, changing his coat with Bronzley, is absurd in the highest degree; nor are we to suppose the fashion of their clothes to be anything alike. Lord Priory's character is contradictory. And Sir William, while disguised, expecting his daughter to pay him particular respect, while he is taking improper liberties with her, is extremely ridiculous." Mrs. Inchbald is no favourite with George Frederick.

He thus remarks, on reading an account of the death of Mr. Middleton, the actor: "The first season of the present management, he belonged to the present theatre. I was frequently with him. He possessed a pleasing harmonious voice; genteel person and address; but his abilities then, were much upon the decline, particularly his memory. He was good-natured, and facetious, and a

pleasant, (perhaps for his own good, too pleasant,) companion. Had it not been for the humanity of a poor mechanic, he would have perished in the streets. When his forlorn condition was known at the theatres, some among the actors hastened to his relief, but their humane endeavours could not prolong his life. He expired at little more than 30 years of age."

A History of Minorca, closes the list of his reading during the present visit to Dublin.

He mentions twice a poem, which he began to write in June, 1799, called the Stage, two hundred lines of which were at one time extant, but the poetical world must be content with the loss, and give him credit for the attempt.

"On the 14th of February," says Mr. Cooke, "I received a letter from Mr. Lewis, of Covent Garden theatre, acquainting me that there would be an opening for me next winter, if I wished it. I answered it, and told him I did wish it. On the 24th, I received another letter, desiring me to send my terms, which I did the same evening, and such terms as I think will be acceded to. He made me an offer seven years ago, which I did not choose to accept."

He has told me in conversation, that the offer he then rejected, was the same he now accepted. What might he not have been, had he accepted that offer!

CHAP. VII.

Mr. Cooke is engaged for London—Appears in Richard the Third, on Friday, the 31st of October, 1800—John Philip Kemble—Short comparative view of the physical powers of Cooke and Kemble—Shylock—Sir Archy M'Sarcasm—Letters from Mr. Andrew Cherry; Mr. W. Smith; Mr. Richard Cumberland; and Mr. ——; remarks on Cooke's mimics—Letter from Mr. T. A. Ward.

WE have now arrived at that important period of Mr. Cooke's life, when he is to appear as the great object of attention to the English theatrical world. When, shaking off for a time, those debasing habits, which clouded all his excellencies, he presents himself to the public of the great metropolis, and commands their applause and admiration.

In the month of June, 1800, Mr. Cooke concluded an engagement for Covent-Garden theatre, with Thomas Harris, Esq. through the agency of Mr. Lewis, the acting manager. in consequence of which he bade adieu to his Irish friends, and embarked at Cork on Monday, the thirteenth of October, and the following Wednesday landed at Pill, near Bristol. On Sunday, the twenty-sixth of October, near midnight, he arrived in London. His engagement had been previously announced to the public, and the next day Mr. Lewis waited upon him; and although they had never before met, and he had now found him in a coffee-room, with other company, Mr. Lewis immediately came up to him, accosted him by name, and announced himself. We always form to ourselves an image or picture of any person who is, by conversation or reading, made an object of attention to the mind. This picture is sometimes corrected or strengthened by description, but even if it is not, a man used to society, and accustomed to observation, will make his ideal portrait so far accurate, that of two or three faces equally unknown to him, he shall say without hesitation, "this is the man."

Cooke, soon after his arrival in London, for the first time, since the unfortunate

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thronged with anxious observers, while the candidate, if a veteran like Cooke, will perhaps walk through the rehearsal, direct the business of his scenes, and give no intimation of the manner he intends to act, or the powers he can display to the public.

The part Mr. Cooke rehearsed, was Richard the Third, and on Friday evening, the thirty-first of October, 1800, he established his fame as an actor, by the performance of this arduous, and varied, and highly wrought character. He says, " never was a reception more flattering; nor ever did I receive more encouraging, indulgent, and warm approbation, than on that night, both through the play, and at the conclusion. Mr. Kemble did me the honour of making one of the audience." We may imagine that there was some difference in the feelings, with which Cooke and Kemble went home that night.

That it may be known to the reader, who were Mr. Cooke's contemporaries in this night's exhibition, I will insert the *Dramatis personæ* as corrected by himself, in his *marked* book, from which he studied—

COVENT-GARDEN, *Friday, Oct.* 31*st*, 1800:

King Henry——Mr. Murray,
Prince of Wales——Mrs. Findlay,
Duke of York——Master Standen,

Richard——Mr. Cooke,
Buckingham——Mr. Whitfield,
Richmond——Mr. Pope,
Ratcliff——Mr. Klanert,
Catesby——Mr. Claremont,
Tressel——Mr. Betterton,
Brackenbury——Mr. Waddy,
Stanley——Mr. Davenport,
Tyrrel——Mr. Abbot,
Lord Mayor——Mr. Thompson.
Queen——Miss Chapman,
Lady Ann——Mrs. Litchfield,
Duchess of York——Miss Leserve.

Mr. Cooke was at this time in the forty-fifth year of his age, and those who did not see him until ten or eleven years after his appearance in London, must call to mind, that after five and forty, time proceeds with an eager and relentless hand, to despoil man of those physical gifts which he had slowly bestowed on him, during the first thirty years of his existence. However, even at the time of his visit to the Western hemisphere, I considered Mr. Cooke's figure and manner, in certain portions of his representation of the crooked-back tyrant, eminently dignified and graceful, when he was in his happiest mood. His superiority over all others, in the confident dissimulation, the crafty hypocrisy, and the bitter sarcasm of the character, is acknowledged by every writer who has criticised his acting. Richard, who could

"——add colours to the cameleon,

> Change shapes with Proteus, for advantages,
> And set the murd'rous Machiavel to school,"

is, as a character for representation, favourable to an able actor, in proportion to its difficulty. The variety of situations which display the multifarious and contradictory qualities of his mind; his ambition and courage; his fawning dissimulation and cunning; his abrupt soldierly bluntness; his smooth-tongued hypocrisy; his unrelenting thirst for blood; his conscientious terrors; his politic circumspection on the eve of battle; his gallant bearing in the conflict of armies; and the last efforts of his rage and despair; are all as advantageous to the great actor, as they are overwhelming to the man of mediocrity. This bow of Ulysses Mr. Cooke not only bent, but his shaft, true to his aim, attained the mark of his ambition. Even those peculiarities, and habits, and tones of voice, which at first startled and almost offended, were converted by that admiration which his abilities created, into sources of pleasure.—His triumph in this character was so complete, that after a struggle, Mr. Kemble resigned it altogether to him.

The reader will here expect some account of the great actor, whose name I have just

mentioned, the only competitor with Mr. Cooke, at the time of which I am treating, and a comparative view of their respective merits.

John Philip Kemble, whose parents I have mentioned, when speaking of his sister, Mrs. Siddons, was born either in the year 1755 or 56. The place of his birth was Preston, in Lancashire. The father of Mr. Kemble, being a papist, sent his son for education to the College of Douay, intending him for a priest of the church of Rome. It appears that Mr. Roger Kemble, though not only an actor himself, but a master of actors, had a great aversion to his children becoming players; and all his children most dutifully determined that they would be players, and players they were. John Philip, in despite of King Roger, preferred dissipation, a strolling company and a barn, to severe study, fasting and prayer, and a shaved crown, and thus followed, what is most flatteringly and most falsely called, the "bent of a man's genius." Kemble had talents to raise him above the vulgar in any situation; and having escaped with tolerable moral, as well as physical, health, from the pestilence of vicious society, he became the proprietor and principal ornament

of a London theatre, instead of being a dignitary of the Church of Rome, and a distinguished teacher of Christianity.

Mr. Kemble's first histrionic efforts, it is said, were not kindly received by the critics of the *barn*.

Penury is the steadfast and undeviating companion of the strolling player, and the stories related of the ludicrous distress of actors, which are made poignant by the subsequent success and splendour of the individual of whom they are told, if not founded in *fact*, have sufficient *probability* to support them. Toney Le Brun's anecdote of Kemble's whipping himself out of his lodgings, the rent of which he could not pay, by lashing a top incessantly over the head of a valetudinarian who lodged under him, until his landlady forgave him his arrears to get rid of him, is well known. The following is, I believe, not in print.

In one of those miserable places, which *were* used as theatres, in some of the respectable towns of England, the male actors dressed and undressed themselves in a kind of cockloft over the stage. Kemble having taken off his coat to deck himself in the trumpery finery of the theatrical wardrobe, cautiously stowed it in a nook, between the rafters of the building

and the roof. Every one knows the adventurous daring of boys to gratify their curiosity, and get a peep at the scenic wonders from which their poverty excludes them.—Some of these urchins had, with towering ambition, reached the roof, and over-topped even the heroic Kemble. Their exertions did not cease here until they had made an aperture in the roof, and proudly looked down on gods and men below. Unfortunately, Kemble's coat obstructed their view. A mischievous elf, finding it within reach, drew the sleeve through the hole he and his companions had made, and as the remainder would not follow, he took his pen-knife and cut it off. The mutilated coat fell in, the arm was carried away, when these imps had satisfied their love of fun and mischief. Kemble, after the labours of the evening, putting his coat on, found the lamentable deficiency, and fearing the laugh of his companions, got home unseen; but what was to be done next morning? he had no other coat; he must go to rehearsal. Summoning his philosophy to his aid, he assumed that look of *sang froid*, of which he is eminently capable, and, with one sleeved, and one sleeveless arm, he coolly walked through the town, to the theatre, followed by a mob of boys, who huzza'd him to

the scenes of his greatness. Here he was received with shouts of laughter by the company, which he bore with the most stoical indifference. Mrs. ———, a London star, on whom this company of Thespians were attending, and who had marked Kemble's superiority of talents, questioned him as to the meaning of his appearance. John, with great *naivetè*, told his misfortune.

"But why not put on another coat this morning?"

"Another," says John, "whose would it be? *I* have no other."

The lady laughed, and had the address to prevail upon the hero, without offending his delicacy, to accept a new coat of her ordering, and was assiduous ever after, in commending his merits.

In 1778, he acted Macbeth at Hull, being his first appearance at that place. He made his way to popularity in the company of Tate Wilkinson, notwithstanding the system of favouritism and possession of parts, an instance of which Wilkinson relates. Finding that a servant to whom he had given permission to go and see Hamlet, remained at home, he questioned him, and was answered, that he would not go to the theatre, because Mr.

Kemble played Hamlet, and it was, "Mr. Cummin's part."

Mr. Kemble remained with the York company until 1781, and then he became the hero of the Irish stage, and remained so till 1783, when he tried his fortune in London, under the auspices of his sister. September the thirtieth, he made his first appearance at Drury-Lane, in the character of Hamlet, which he still continues to play with more reputation than any man since Garrick.

In 1784—5—6 and 7, the writer saw Mr. Kemble in many of his great parts, but did not consider him as good an actor as Mrs. Siddons, or Mr. Hendersen. After the death of the last mentioned gentleman, Mr. Kemble was the undisputed hero of the London stage, until the appearance of George Frederick Cooke, in 1800.

A German writer, of the name of Goede, has described and compared the personal appearance and physical powers of Messrs. Cooke and Kemble, so nearly to my satisfaction, that I will transcribe the passage for my readers, with such alteration, as shall make it conform to my ideas:

Of the two, Kemble's countenance is the most noble and refined, but the muscles are not so flexible and subject to command as Cooke's.

Cooke is a great comedian, as well as tragedian; but Kemble has no favour with the comic muse. Both are excellent in those gradual changes of the countenance, which sometimes precede, sometimes accompany, the words they utter, or which are addressed to them. It is this play of the features, which depicts the inward emotion of the soul, and identifies the player with the character he represents. Kemble has a very graceful manly figure, is perfectly well made, and his naturally commanding stature, adds great dignity to those picturesque attitudes, which he delights to study and exhibit. His face is the noblest I ever saw on any stage, being a fine oval, with a handsome aquiline nose, well formed, with fiery and romantic eyes, shadowed by strongly marked eye-brows; his forehead open; his chin prominent and rather pointed; and all his features so softly interwoven or blended, that no deeply marked line is perceptible. His physiognomy indeed commands at first sight, since it denotes in the most expressive manner, a man of superior mind and judgment; his voice is feeble, but of great depth. This is his greatest natural deficiency.

Cooke does not possess the elegant figure
nble, but his countenance beams with

great expression. The most prominent features in the physiognomy of Cooke, are a long and somewhat hooked nose of uncommon breadth between the eyes, which are fiery, dark, and at times terribly expressive; with prominent lids and flexible brows; a lofty and broad forehead; and the muscles around the mouth pointedly marked. His countenance is certainly not so dignified as Kemble's, but its expression of passion, particularly the worst passions of our nature, is stronger. His voice, though sharp, is powerful and of great compass, a pre-eminence which he possesses by nature over Kemble, and of which he skilfully avails himself. His attitudes are far less picturesque than those of Kemble, but they are just, appropriate, and natural.

The reader will perceive that Mr. Kemble's fine face and figure, must in some characters have given him a superiority; and added to his better education and continued study as an actor, a gentleman, and a scholar, must place him eminently above competition, in such parts as Hamlet, Coriolanus, and some others; but, for Richard the Third, Mr. Cooke's figure was as good as Mr. Kemble's, his face better, his voice better, his habitual manner better, as being more quick,

abrupt, and impetuous, and his attitudes better, as having less the appearance of study. Therefore it is not to be wondered at, that the stranger should overthrow the monarch of the stage, on this field, although intrenched strong, and sheltered by ramparts of public opinion, which he had been twenty years erecting. Mr. Cooke played Richard this season twenty-three times.

The second character our hero appeared in, was Shylock. Shakspeare's play of the Merchant of Venice, was performed on Monday, November 10th, 1800, at Covent-Garden, Mr. Cooke having performed Richard twice, and the intermediate nights having been occupied by the *run* of a new comedy.

In Shylock as in Richard, the peculiar advantages of Mr. Kemble, were of no effect against Cooke, and his talents shone unclouded, by any mists which could be raised by comparison. Indeed, I can conceive nothing so perfectly "the Jew that Shakspeare drew" as the voice, face, manner, and expression of Mr. Cooke; Mr. Macklin may have been better, but it is almost thirty years since I saw Mr. Macklin, and my memory is not of such tenacious stuff, as to enable me to make a comparison between him and Mr. Cooke. Those who were present at Mr. Cooke's

first exhibition of Shylock on the London boards, say that in the great scene of the third act, he was greeted with shouts of applause. The gloomy satisfaction that seemed to accompany the recollection of the bond by which he had Antonio "on the hip," and the savage exultation of his laugh, when the full amount of his enemies' losses is stated, were frightfully impressive. The transitions were made in a masterly manner, and the speech in which Shylock urges his own wrongs, and vindicates his tribe, formed a climax of as well-wrought passion, as can be conceived. In the *Trial scene*, the "lodged hate," of the impenetrable Israelite, was kept constantly in view. The audience were surprised and delighted, by the abruptness of his reply to Portia's request, that he would permit the bond to be torn; "When it is *paid* according to the tenour," he replies, indicating a degree of apprehension, lest she *should* tear it, and at the same time, a malignant recognition of the penalty due. In fact, the whole of this scene ever was inimitable in Mr. Cooke's hands, and defies all competition.

I will here remark, that one of the great and peculiar charms of Mr. Cooke's tragedy, was the natural, unaffected, inartificial tone

with which he delivered it; and I am happy to support myself by the opinion of one of the best dramatic critics in the language, Mr. Thomas Holcroft. After quoting from Marmontel the praises of Mademoiselle Claron, he proceeds, "Why was Garrick so wonderfully great? It was, because he had a like strong conviction, or rather feeling, of the true and false manner. To avoid all possible song, or whine, to deliver the words in the tone and manner of men, discoursing with each other under the influence of passion, and to understand all the various and distinct feelings, which the successive words of a sentence must have in the minds of persons who speak such words, were the indefatigable studies of his life. How glorious was the reward!" "Mrs. Siddons is a noble actress! In her impassioned scenes, the man who can listen without frequent surprise and ecstacy, must have no discrimination, no feeling, nor any sense of the true dignity of excellence. Mr. J. P. Kemble is often too cold and declamatory: but he has his inspired moments, which give, perhaps, the greater delight, by bursting upon the audience when least expected. Both brother and sister, however, are the practical patrons of this hateful recitative; and are, there-

foré, theoretically its defenders. Mr. Kemble contends, that blank verse demands a recitation peculiar to itself. Can passionate, or unimpassioned discourse, ever require tones in which it is never heard, except by children repeating the catechism, or their imitators? As a tragedian, Mr. Cooke has the proud honour of being nearly free from this sing-song defect, this puerile shool-boy habit of whining out a lesson."

The third character which Mr. Cooke played in London, was Sir Archy M'Sarcasm, in Macklin's farce of Love-a-la-Mode. He played it for the first time in London, on Thursday, November the thirteenth, after having performed Shylock the same evening. To personate these two characters on the same evening, was customary with the veteran player, who was the author of the farce, and Cooke continued the custom as long as he lived. I presume the character of Sir Archy had not been attempted in the metropolis since Macklin's death, and it was now revived with all the force and point which its author gave it; but as this fawning Scot may be considered as a slight sketch of what Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant is the finished painting, I shall say nothing more of Mr. Cooke's peculiar excellence in that style of

acting, until I arrive at the last mentioned character, in regular course.

Cooke, now at the pinnacle of good fortune, found himself courted by actors, by authors, and by managers. Letters of congratulation and adulation poured in upon him from every part of the kingdom, and every post brought invitations to play, from the best-natured, kind-hearted, generous managers in the world, offering to share their profits with him, in the most friendly and disinterested manner imaginable. I shall select a few from the masses before me, and occasionally insert them, to elucidate my narrative. I do not mean managerical invitations; they are too much alike, and too insipid for any purpose but the original. First I will give my reader a specimen of Mr. Andrew Cherry.

"And now, my dear George, let me congratulate you on the success your merit long since demanded, and nothing but want of opportunity could deprive you of.—Long may you live to enjoy it! It is the fortune of prosperous ability to have many adulators.—*I* am none:—and only pride myself on predicting, that your reception in the capital was only such as I was certain you *must* receive, were you brought before the public there, under the auspices of Managers, whose Principle,

as well as Interest, it was to do you ample justice:—In sincerest friendship, I rejoice to hear you have found it so."

To this letter, is subjoined the following postcript:

"Walter Smith, who, poor fellow, has dislocated his shoulder by an over-turn of one of our coaches on Monday last, in which disaster poor Glassington was a melancholy sharer, by breaking his leg; one of my little girls also, considerably bruised; and several males and females, more or less injured, desires his very best remembrances to you,—he is in a fair way—"

It will be necessary to inform some of my readers, others will know it by the style, that Mr. Cherry, the writer of the above elegant, perspicuous, and humorous letter, and its lucidly intelligent postscript, is the celebrated Mr. Cherry, one of the successful authors for the present British stage. This postscript, I doubt not, will remind the reader of Hostess Quickly's answer to Sir John Falstaff, in the 2d part of Henry 4th. "Thou didst swear to me on a parcel-gilt-goblet, sitting in my dolphin chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, on Wednesday, in Whitsunweek, when the prince broke thy head," &c. &c. but

the modern dramatist, I think, has the preference; he certainly, in his own person, outdoes the confused association of ideas, which Shakspeare bestows upon Hostess Quickly.

The next correspondent I shall notice, is good-natured "Mr. Smith, of Bury," as Mr. Cumberland calls him. He is, as I believe, disinterestedly anxious, that Mr. Cooke should select such characters for acting, as will add lustre to his present fame. He tells Cooke, he does not "like Stukely, it is not important enough. If Beverly is *half* as well played, he will take the lead. Stukely will only call forth your second-rate powers.—Why not Zanga, Pierre, Leontes, Plain Dealer, Bajazet, Maskwell, Old Bachelor, Falstaff, or Ford, and why not Leon? There is a good old play, in which I played Valentine with success, "Wit without Money," Beaumont and Fletcher, look at it, 'twill be novelty at least. Ventidius, Dorax, and some others, I fear would be attended with too much difficulty; you seem to me, (but this *entre nous*,) to have no support from women, but I am unacquainted with the present company." In another, from the same gentleman, I find: "On reconsideration, I do not think, "Wit without Money," would

do." What an inexhaustible mine this sentence would be to some of the "witty rogues," who guide the public taste of the English metropolis! "The audiences are now too nice to relish the broad, though exquisite wit and satire, of Beaumont and Fletcher, without skilful pruning;" and that Mr. Smith despaired of. "What think you of Cato, for your benefit? Cato has not been tolerably performed these 30 years. Sheridan, the last good one. Yet the play, on the revival with Walker, and Younger, (the latter miserable,) crowded one house, and I am persuaded, that you would revive the prejudice in favour of the old play, still prevalent in the minds of thousands, young and old. Your firm and weighty delivery, would suit the dignity of the character, and stamp a reputation on the old Roman, long since forgotten.

Your sincere well wisher,
W. SMITH."

Mr. Smith was long a favourite of the English stage, playing heroes in tragedy, and the first line of characters in genteel comedy. I remember him in Macbeth, Lord Townly, and Charles Surface. He was handsome in

person, and elegant in manner, but possessed a voice harsh, unaccommodating, and inharmonious.

Mr. Cumberland himself was drawn out on this occasion, and appears with characteristic anxiety for the fate of one of his multifarious offspring.

"SIR, "*Tunbridge Wells.*

"My worthy friend, Sir James B. Burges, informs me, that in a conversation he had the pleasure to hold with you, at your lodgings, you told him, that it was in contemplation to bring my play of *Torrendal* upon the stage at your theatre.

"I confess to you, it would give me great satisfaction to know, that such was your design, wishing as I do, to have that production, on which I have expended my best efforts, committed to your care, and supported by your talents. Have the goodness, therefore, to tell me what you know, or believe, to be the intention of Mr. Harris, in the case of Torrendal, and you will much oblige, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

R. CUMBERLAND."

I will next give extracts from the letter of an actor, one of George Frederick's former

friends, which gives a good green-room picture, and shows how some of those managers, who solicited his assistance, and obtained it, treated the news of his success, and endeavoured to depreciate his talents.

" *Liverpool, Nov.* 15*th*, 1800.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" Before I set out for ——, allow me to congratulate you on your uncommon success, though not greater than I predicted. You may think my congratulations frivolous, but, as they are, you have them, and my best wishes sincerely. I must now acquaint you with a battle of the tongue, which I fought for you on my first night of sitting in the —— green-room. Your name being started, the tyrant ——, began a voluminous volley of invective on you. I defended you for some time. Y—— became an auxiliary to A——, and in order to strengthen his battery, arose and gave what he called imitations of your manner in Richard, appealing to me for my judgment, as to the likeness.

" Pray, Sir, is it not like ?"

" Not when I saw it. If it was like your imitation, I should consider myself an ass, for defending such a person."

You will shortly see —— in London, and

he will relate the matter to you exactly, and also the late business, in which I have had the pleasure of telling —— freely my opinion of him, and that before his slaves. Cooke, you are now above your enemies; hold the rudder *yourself*, and your triumph will be glorious."

I have heard many give what they called imitations of Cooke's playing. If they could assume a sharp and discordant tone of voice, though incapable of any of those inflexions, and modulations, of which his was possessed, they thought they were like Cooke, and many of their hearers thought the same. But these mimics, like most mimics, have no conception of that delicacy of discrimination, that natural propriety of "emphasis and discretion," which was the soul of Cooke's exquisite acting.

I will dismiss my hero's correspondents for the present, after inserting a letter from a man, who was his true and oft-tried friend, for many years; and who takes this opportunity of giving him advice, which if followed, would have saved him from the evils which afterwards beset him.

"Dear Sir,

"Although I never doubted your success,

let me congratulate you on your first appearance at Covent-Garden Theatre. As I told you in a former letter, you have it in your power to please. You have done so. The public are your friends, look to them *alone*—for while you merit their patronage, you will ever experience it. Be not, therefore, persuaded into company; that is, tavern company: for there are those who will, under the mask of friendship, endeavour to obtain your society in such places, or at their houses, knowing the easiness of your temper, (excuse my bluntness, it can only be for your future comfort,) to betray you into excess, to undo you with the town. I cannot point out those I allude to; your own judgment must be your tutor; only be aware of what I say.

"When you are not too much occupied, I shall receive a line from you with pleasure, corroborating your favour with the most disinterested audience in the kingdom. Success continue to attend you, is the sincere wish of,

Dear Sir, yours most freely,

Chester, Nov. 3d, 1800. T. A. WARD."

CHAP. VIII.

Mr. Cooke plays Iago—His great success—He plays Macbeth—Comparison with Kemble in that character, to Cooke's disadvantage—His great success in Kitely—His benefit—Mr. Harris's liberality—Cooke plays the Stranger—Fails in the representation of that character, particularly by comparison with Kemble—Plays Sir Giles Over-Reach with the greatest success—Concludes his playing for the season in Richard.

WE now behold George Frederick Cooke in his meridian splendour. The clouds which once overshadowed or hid him from view, and the spots which tarnished the brightness of his talents, have vanished. He is the favourite of the public, to whose pleasure he administers, and of the manager, to whose coffers he attracts an undeviating stream of wealth. The reader, I hope, will be inclined to dwell with me on this bright spot of the picture, and to rejoice, that under the influence of *happy circumstances*, man, though once debased by vice, and enchained by sordid habit, can rise to his proper level, and re-

gain his freedom. Mr. Cooke found, in the desire to surpass his great competitor Kemble, and to hold fast the footing he had gained in the metropolis, a sufficient stimulus to the exertion of his talents, and all those energies which might counteract the effects of habitual weakness and indulgence. Thus we have a proof in Mr. Cooke, of one of those apparent contradictions in the human character so frequently met with, viz. that the inferior consideration shall be an adequate motive, when the superior has no effect. To establish a name in London as a player, was sufficient to make Mr. Cooke a sober and regular man; but to erect the fair fabric of a good reputation in the world, to preserve health, to accumulate wealth, and acquire power, were motives insufficient to withstand the allurement of habitual indulgence, or casual opportunities of intemperance. The effectual stimulus was however at this time applied, the object to be obtained was immediate, was present, and the friends of the drama might entertain a hope, that one of the first geniuses that had adorned the stage, was rescued by great public attention from those vices, which obscurity had cherished and matured.

Another opportunity was afforded to Mr. Cooke for the exertion of his talents, on Friday the twenty-eighth of November. On that evening, the tragedy of Othello was performed, to exhibit our hero for the first time in London, as Iago. In this character he had no competitor, for Mr. Kemble had at this time never played it. He had only to combat the recollection of Mr. Henderson, and though that excellent actor was fondly remembered by a small part of the audience, in this his favourite character, Mr. Cooke's success was complete, for they pronounced him the legitimate successor of Henderson; while the younger part of the frequenters of the theatre, agreed that they had never seen Iago until now. In the exhibition of every species of hypocrisy, Mr. Cooke excelled all other players. The hypocrisy of Iago endeavours to conceal itself by seriousness; and is distinct from the impudent hypocrisy of Richard the Third, or the gay and sarcastic hypocrisy of Sir Archy M'Sarcasm.—Mr. Cooke has been accused of betraying so much of the workings of cunning and deceit in Iago, that it appears wonderful to the audience how Othello could be deceived by him; but it must be remembered, first, that it was

to the audience, and not to Othello, that he betrayed the workings of his soul on his expressive countenance; and, secondly, that Othello, seeing through the jaundiced medium of jealousy, is not capable of discovering, even in the eager and obtrusive suggestions of Iago, any other motive than his extreme love and honesty.

Iago is another character, in addition to those formerly mentioned, which did not suffer in the representation, from any of those peculiarities of manner or voice remarkable in Mr. Cooke; while the quickness of his action, and the strongly natural expression of feeling, which were as peculiarly his, identified him with the character, and marked him as its true representative.

Mr. Cooke's next character in his London series, was Macbeth. Here Mr. Kemble was opposed to him with advantage, and he sunk under the comparison. Mr. Kemble's dignified person, noble face, graceful attitudes, deliberate manner, in short, all his peculiarities, were congenial to Macbeth; and all the peculiarities of Mr. Cooke adverse.—Still our hero maintained the field manfully, and though he lost in this instance, by a comparison with Kemble, he lost no ground in

public estimation as an actor, but rather proved the versatility of his talents. He performed the character four nights during this season, to crowded houses; and his Macbeth, Iago, Sir Archy, Shylock, and Richard, continued to enrich Mr. Harris, until Wednesday, the seventeenth of December, when another magnet was added to the list.

This was Kitely, in Ben Jonson's eccentric but rather obsolete comedy, of "Every Man in his Humour." If it should be asked, why is the familiar dialogue of Jonson, less accordant with the language of the present day, than that of Shakspeare? I should answer, because it is less natural. The language of Shakspeare is less obsolete, than that of authors who wrote many years after him. His poetry is the felicitous effusion of genius, his prose the correct transcript of nature.

"Every Man in his Humour," is the only comedy of Ben Jonson's which holds its place on the stage, and, with all its excellencies, its diversity of character and of incident, its humour and its wit, requires the aid of good comedians to keep it there. On this occasion the play was thus cast,

Kitely——Mr. Cooke,
Old Knowel——Mr. Murray,
Justice Clement——Mr. Emery,
Master Stephen——Mr. Knight,
Brainworm——Mr. Munden,
Young Knowell——Mr. Brunton,
Wellbred——Mr. H. Johnston,
Master Matthew——Mr. Simmons,
Cash——Mr. Farley,
Downright——Mr. Waddy,
Captain Bobadil——Mr. Fawcett,
Formal——Mr. Atkins,
Cob——Mr. Thompson.
Bridget——Mrs. St. Ledger,
Tib——Mrs. Powell,
Dame Kitely——Miss Chapman.

Mr. Cooke delivered the prologue spoken by Garrick, on his revival of the play, and by his delineation of Kitely, added very much to his reputation. By some it was deemed the most perfect piece of playing he had yet exhibited. "In depicting the restless starts and sallies of the soul," says a writer at the time, "under the influence of the green-eyed monster jealousy, he marked every varied working of the mind, every abrupt transition of passion with most felicitous accuracy and energetic glow. But the scene in which, struggling with the apprehension of danger, and the shame of avowing that

apprehension, he attempts to disclose, yet at the same time fears to betray, his jealous humour to his confidential servant *Cash*, is justly entitled to superior commendation. Here his powers found ample scope for exertion, and deservedly called forth tumultuous bursts of applause."

It will be recollected, that Kitely was one of the characters in which Mr. Cooke saw the English Roscius, and he has told me, that he remembered, and profited by his manner of playing it. It is much to Mr. Cooke's honour, that he never scrupled to mention the advantages he had derived from his illustrious predecessors of the sock or buskin. He has read to me the scene with Cash, as an exhibition of Garrick's manner of playing it, and certainly it was exquisitely fine.

We are presented with no novelty by our hero, until Tuesday, January the twenty-seventh, 1801, on which night he played the Stranger for his benefit. This being out of the usual season for the benefits, and much to the advantage of the performer, evinces the high estimation in which Mr. Cooke stood at this time with Mr. Harris. It is mentioned by the writers of the day, as an act of almost unparalelled courtesy and complai-

sance, on the part of the proprietors. Mr. Cooke in his chronicle says, "Mr. Harris favoured me with my night in January, 1801, though my engagement was for three years, at 6, 7, and 8 pounds per week, and my night according to my salary, and paying the usual expenses. It was given me free of *every* expense." The charges, independent of the expense of *supernumeraries*, are stated by the author of the Dramatic Censor, to have been at that time, one hundred and sixty pounds, which sum is, of course, the amount of the present made to Mr. Cooke by the proprietors, in addition to the advantage before mentioned, of placing his night early in the season. "I took," says Mr. Cooke, "*the Stranger;* the first night of its being represented in that theatre, and recited Garrick's Jubilee ode, with the appropriate music, by the vocal performers. Receipt of the house, about five hundred and sixty pounds." The novelty promised in the bills, and the avowed purpose of rivalling Mr. Kemble in one of his most successful parts, answered Mr. Cooke's purpose in bringing a crowded house; but he sunk in the comparison with his great rival on this more than on any former occasion. Kemble's physical perfections, and even his

physical defects, are in unison with the character of the Stranger; and the acquired graces of both mind and body, gave an exquisite finish to the portrait he presented, of the woe-worne, noble misanthrope. "His saturnine cast of features," says the Censor, "his haggard visage, and above all, his deep sepulchral tones, which strike awfully upon the ear, like the ominous croak of night's funereal bird, are admirably qualified to depict the workings of a mind weighed down by sorrow and irretrievable calamity."

Mr. Cooke had none of this; and his performance of the Stranger, only served to remind the audience of his rival's great excellence in the part.

The play was repeated at Covent Garden, on Monday, the second of February, and then was laid aside; while Kemble, as if in triumph, played it in his best style on the tenth. Mr. Cooke played the Stranger no more in London.

About this time, George Colman the younger's comedy of the "Poor Gentleman," was brought out at Covent Garden Theatre, and continued to run through the remainder of the season, on such nights as Cooke did not perform; who repeated with increasing

reputation the characters I have mentioned, without adding to the stock, until Saturday, March the twenty-eighth, when Massinger's excellent comedy of "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," was *got up* for the benefit of Mr. Lewis, and Mr. Cooke, in Sir Giles Overreach, added another wreath to his laurels.

Mr. Cooke, in his chronicle, says, "I was prevented acting for any of the benefits, Mr. Lewis's excepted." That is, the proprietors reserved Cooke's attraction for their own emolument; for he continued to play on such nights as were appropriated to them, until Monday the fifteenth of June.

So illustrious a contemporary of Mr. Cooke's, as William T. Lewis, Esq. cannot with propriety be passed over, without particular notice, in a work of this kind, and I seize the opportunity of paying a tribute to his memory, before entering into the merits of the play, which, by being performed at this time for his benefit, has brought him before the reader.

Mr. Lewis was bred to the stage from his infancy, and both in his public and private deportment, has been its boast. As an actor, and as a gentleman, he has been an honour to his profession. At the age of twenty, he

was the favourite actor of the Dublin stage. In October, 1773, he made his debut in London at the Covent Garden Theatre, in the character of Belcour, in Mr. Cumberland's second, and best comedy, the "West Indian." His second character was Posthumous, in Shakspeare's *Cymbeline*; indeed he appears to have been in early life quite a retainer of the tragic muse, and played all the young heroes and blank verse lovers of the drama; but Thalia at length claimed him as exclusively her own, the public adjudged that the claim was well founded; he yielded, and for the last thirty years of his life, was the unrivalled favourite of the comic muse, in all that was frolic, gay, humorous, whimsical, eccentric, and at the same time elegant.

Eleven years after his debut in London, I saw him in his best characters, and in his best style; before he had descended to be the genteel buffoon of modern farce; his Michael Perez, Mercutio, Ranger, Faddle, Lackland, Sir Charles Racket, Petruchio, and Squire Groom, left images of delight upon my mind, which have been often revived, and even at this distant period, can be conjured up by the powers of recollection, with a vividness that puts all subsequent exhibitions of the same

characters quite in the back ground. His Prince of Wales, in "Henry 4th," Crevelt, in "He Would be a Soldier," Egerton, in "the Man of the World," and some others, I can scarcely recall a trace of in my memory.

A very excellent dramatic critic, Mr. Leigh Hunt, who did not see Mr. Lewis until he was an old man, writes thus of him. "Lewis is all heart, all fire; he does not study forms and ceremonies; he is polite from a natural wish to please, and if he is not always the gentleman, nobody doubts what he could be." "In the scene in "Wild Oats," where the young rustic expresses his admiration of Rover's theatrical talents, and at parting, shakes his hand with good-natured familiarity, Elliston, in the midst of his reciprocal good-humour, has too much the air of one who condescends; Lewis gives the bumpkin as hearty a shake, as if it had been his brother, and forgets every thing but the honest soul of his new acquaintance. It is in characters like these, full of frankness and vivacity, that Mr. Lewis claims an original excellence. I do not see by what propriety he has been called by the exclusive title of *gentleman* Lewis; perhaps it is because he never acts vulgarly, and without doubt, vulgarity seems

totally impossible to an actor of his manners; but it does not follow, that he, who never acts vulgarly, should always act with refinement."

If my memory serves me truly, the reason of the above honourable appellation being prefixed to Mr. Lewis's name, was to distinguish him from Mr. Lee Lewes.

Mr. Lewis had been acting-manager of Covent Garden Theatre, under Mr. Harris's proprietorship, eighteen years, at the time of Mr. Cooke's joining the company; and continued his active exertions in that capacity, until 1803, and before the public, until a short time before his death, which happened in 1810.

To return to Mr. Lewis's benefit in 1801. The play he had selected, was one of the happy productions of those old English dramatists, of whom the Edinburgh reviewers have truly said, "that they are more poetical, and more original in their diction, than the dramatists of any other age or country. Their scenes abound more in varied images, and gratuitous excursions of fancy. Their illustrations, and figures of speech, are more borrowed from rural life, and from the simple occupations, or universal feelings of man-

kind." This able and elegant essay, on "the charming old writers" of England, is entitled "a Criticism on Ford's Dramatic Works;" I will enrich my pages with another short extract. Speaking of the style of these writers; "It is not, for the most part, a lofty or sonorous style; nor is it finical or affected; or strained, quaint, or pedantic; but it is, at the same time, a style full of turn and contrivance; with some little degree of constraint and involution; very often characterized by a studied briefness and simplicity of diction, yet relieved by a certain indirect and figurative cast of expression; and almost always coloured with a modest tinge of ingenuity, and fashioned, rather too visibly, upon a particular model of elegance and purity. In scenes of powerful passion, this sort of artificial prettiness is commonly shaken off; and in Shakspeare it disappears, under all his forms of animation: but it sticks closer to most of his contemporaries. In Massinger, (who has no passion,) it is almost always discernible."

In "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," Mr. Lewis played *Wellborn*, and Mr. Cooke, *Sir Giles Overreach*, a character peculiarly adapted to his genius and his powers. It is

a highly coloured picture by the author, and Mr. Cooke's colouring was no less vivid and glowing in the representation. Arrogant and servile; haughty to inferiors, and fawning to those who are placed above him, by rank and fortune; daring and relentless, yet finally overpowered by the most frightful despair: this terrible portrait of unprincipled villany, was by the talents of Cooke, rendered one of the most awfully impressive lessons which the drama ever presented.

From this time, until Monday the fifteenth of June, Mr. Cooke continued to repeat the characters he had played since his arrival in the metropolis, and on the evening of that day closed his theatrical labours for the season, in the same character with which he had commenced it, and played *Richard the Third*, for the twenty-third time, to a numerous, brilliant, and delighted audience.

CHAP. XI.

Mr. Cooke leaves London for Birmingham—Opens there in Richard—His great attraction—Goes to Edinburgh—His marriage with Miss Daniels pronounced null and void, *by Sir W. Scott—Great success in Edinburgh—Goes to Manchester—Newcastle—Is absent on the night he is advertised to open the Covent Garden Theatre.*

I HAVE dwelt with pleasure upon the occurrences of the season 1800—1. My hero was a subject to be contemplated with exultation, and though it is certain, that had his previous years been employed profitably, and his great natural talents cultivated, and strengthened by temperance and study, instead of being clouded and enervated by indolence and debauchery, he would have shone long before the period of which I have been treating, with a splendour incomparably greater than he did at that time; yet to see his powers awakened, and uniformly exerted, with the genuine spirit of virtuous ambition, for nearly eight months, was a specta-

cle to rejoice the heart of any man who loves his species. It is to be lamented, that Mr. Cooke should find any relaxation from his London labours; that he should, by returning to his provincial associates, be removed from the gaze of the metropolitan world, whose attention and approbation stimulated him to well-doing. Could this stimulus have been applied for years, without intermission, instead of months, perhaps the disease would have been altogether removed; but there is good reason to suppose, that on returning to his old companions, he fell into his old ways.

Speaking of his first season in London, he says, "that season, I acted Richard, Macbeth, Iago, Shylock, Kitely, Sir Giles Overreach, and Sir Archy M'Sarcasm. I appeared in Richard one night, at Rochester, for Mrs. Dibden's benefit. On Monday, the 15th of June, 1801, I finished for the season with Richard, and early the next morning set out for Birmingham. I made my first appearance in that town, (Mr. M'Cready manager,) in Richard, on Wednesday the seventeenth."

The account of Cooke's great success in London, which spread through all the dramatic world of England, excited the greatest

degree of curiosity. Those who had rejected the gold before, received it currently after its passing the London mint; and his old friends and admirers wished an opportunity of greeting him with tokens of joy at his success. Notwithstanding that Mrs. Siddons and her son had nearly exhausted admiration and money, by playing Jane Shore, and Hastings, (and perhaps Romeo and Juliet,) Cooke's grimy faced friends of Birmingham flocked to see him, and called three or four times for repetitions of his Richard. His benefit yielded one hundred and thirty pounds. He says, "I went through my number of nights with good success, and much approbation; when they were finished, I set out for Edinburgh, (Mr. Jackson manager,) where I opened on Monday, in the race week, with Shylock."

In the mean time, the engagement he had entered into with the fair Jewess, Miss Daniels, was dissolved by course of law. This event is thus announced in the prints of the day. "On the 4th of July instant, a cause respecting the validity of the marraige of Mr. George Cooke, of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, and Miss Alicia Daniels, of the Theatre Royal, Bath, came on to be heard in

Doctor's Commons, before the Right Hon. Sir William Scott, when the learned judge, pronounced the marriage *null and void.*"

Here we may imagine Cooke exclaiming with Shylock, "O, most *learned judge!*" "a second Daniel's come to judgment!"

During this visit to Edinburgh, Mr. Cooke performed Shylock twice, Richard three times, Iago, Othello, Sir Giles Overreach twice, Penruddock, The Stranger, Macbeth, Sir Archy M'Sarcasm twice, Jaques, Petruchio, and Hamlet. The Scotch amateurs and critics, paid the warmest tribute of applause to his merit. They were particularly delighted with his Sir Archy, and being eminently qualified to judge of the dialect, they were astonished at Cooke's perfect imitation of all its peculiarities, and felt the strongest desire to see him play Macklin's great part, Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant.

Mr. Cooke says in his chronicle, "The applause I received in Edinburgh was highly flattering. I acted Iago one night, Mr. Woods Othello, and Othello to Mr. Woods's Iago. Mr. Woods is a correct good actor." Our hero's Othello was admired by the gude folk of Edinburgh, though it was shrewdly remarked, that he was least happy in the speech

to the senate, and seemed to be indeed, "little skill'd in the set phrase of peace." He played Macbeth, and Sir Archy, for his benefit, which I need not say was well attended.

"We removed," says Mr. Cooke, "to Glasgow, where I finished my number of nights, and quitted Scotland, very sensible of the favour with which I had been received."

Our hero next proceeded to Liverpool, of which theatre Mr. Francis Aickin was the manager. Here he again opened in Richard, to a house of two hundred and forty pounds. "My nights ended," says he, "I went to Manchester, where I was most warmly greeted, and acted with great success, both for myself and the managers." The management still continued with Messrs. Banks and Ward.

He opened at Manchester, August 24th, with King Richard, and his old friends greeted him as coming to them, literally, his "brows bound with victorious wreaths," and exulted in the success of their favourite performer. He played here at this time, besides Richard, Iago, Shylock, Sir Archy M'Sarcasm, Stukely, Harmony, in "Every one has his Fault," Octavian, in which he always seems to have given great delight to the critical manufacturers of Manchester, Hamlet

ble's great effort, and avowed opposition in the part of Richard, was altogether baffled, and all the business of the theatre thrown into disorder.

Mr. Lewis's letter, which is directed "George Cooke, Esq. Theatre Royal, Manchester. If gone, to be forwarded," and which appears to have been taken up, the "Manchester" crossed out, and "Newcastle on Tyne," substituted, is dated,

"T. R. Covent Garden, Sept. 5th, 1801," and runs thus,

"DEAR SIR,

It being of much consequence to the theatre to commence the season as strong as possible, we have announced you for your favourite Richard, for Monday the 14th instant, and hope to have the satisfaction of seeing you in perfect health at rehearsal, the previous Saturday; Mr. Harris joins me in best wishes. I am, dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

WILLIAM T. LEWIS."

It was as late as the fourth of September, when Mr. Cooke played Macbeth for his benefit at Manchester, and at that very time the bills of Covent Garden Theatre announcing his appearance in Richard, for the opening

night, were posted about the city of London, and his name advertised in the papers for the same purpose; yet we see him going with what he calls, a "small undisciplined set," to Newcastle, and then for a month he was loitering at Newcastle, and in the towns on his road to London, without any apparent cause of detention; all this taken in connection, degrades Mr. Cooke very nearly to the pitiable condition from which his London engagement appeared to have rescued him.

CHAP. X.

Confusion at the theatre in consequence of Mr. Cooke's absence—Remarks in the public prints—He returns to London, and opens in Richard—His apology—Plays Stukely with unrivalled excellence—Goes to Bath and Bristol—Mr Elliston—Colman's Iron Chest—Elliston's and Kemble's Sir Edward Mortimer—Mr. Cooke plays Jaques, in As you like It—Zanga—Lear—Orsino—Falstaff for his benefit, (which is again made a clear one)—Renews his engagement—His salary advanced to fourteen Guineas—Plays Sir Pertinax McSycophant for Mr. Lewis's benefit.

IN the mean time the hour had arrived, which the managers of Covent Garden Theatre had announced for his first appearance in the season, and a crowded audience, many of whom had witnessed Mr. Kemble's newly studied Richard on the preceding Saturday, were ready to receive him with triumphal applause; when they were told that the play was changed to "Lovers' Vows." Great dissatisfaction and opposition ensued. It

appears that Mr. Lewis, the acting manager, was not prepared for the event, and it was some time before the clamours of the audience drew him forth to apologize for the disappointment consequent upon non-performance of the promises contained in his bills. The public were told that Mr. Cooke had received due notice, and had failed to make his appearance. Quiet, though not good-humour, was restored, and the performances of the evening were suffered to proceed.

The newspapers, and other periodical works, expressed the disappointment of the public. They stated that it was known, that Mr. Kemble had been preparing himself to contest the honour of dying in Bosworth field. Contrary to the usual etiquette of the theatres, Drury-Lane had announced Richard as its opening play, after the bills of Covent Garden had been distributed advertising the same piece. This was an avowal on the part of Mr. Kemble, of an intended personal trial of strength with Mr. Cooke. The opportunity of judging the merits of the two theatrical champions, in this their favourite part, was seized with avidity by the frequenters of the theatres; but when expectation was at its highest, Mr. Cooke had most unaccounta-

bly absented himself from the lists, and of course the combat could not take place. By some of these publications, Mr. Cooke was criminated, and by others excused; and it was even said, that illness caused by the rupture of a blood vessel had prevented his arrival in London. We may judge somewhat of the case, by quoting his chronicle.

"On the twenty-first of September," that is, a week after he had ceased to play, "I left Newcastle, and arrived the next night at Matlock in Derbyshire. I should have written Matlock Baths. I quitted this pleasant scene of retirement on Monday, October the twelfth, and slept at Leicester, where I spent a pleasant evening, in company of Sir Justinian Isham, Bart. of Lamport in Northamptonshire, (who accompanied us from Matlock,) Mr. Carrick, master of an academy, and a Mr. Gardner. Mr. C. breakfasted with us next morning, and afterwards showed us some particular places, in and about the town, particularly the house wherein Richard the Third is said to have slept the night before the battle of Bosworth. It bears the marks of antiquity, and is now used as a Warehouse. We left Leicester, after parting with Sir Justinian near his own house,

between Harborough and Northampton, and proceeded to the latter; the next night to St. Albans; and arrived in Boulton-street, Piccadilly, the next day, October the fifteenth. I had scarcely entered my apartment, when I recieved a visit from Mr. Harris, manager, and chief proprietor of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden."

Of this visit we are left to imagine what we please, for here our hero abruptly breaks off; he however tells us, "On the 19th, I made my first appearance for the season in Richard. As I expected some opposition for not being in London, on the night of opening, Sept. 14th, when I was advertised for Richard, (*vide*, newspapers, magazines, &c.) I went on the stage, before the curtain, prior to the commencement of the play, and made what was deemed a sufficient apology, and all clamour and opposition ceased." He says in another manuscript, for I have several, which appear to have been written at different times and places, and without any reference to each other, "My first appearance in 1801—2, was in Richard, on Monday the 19th. I went on before the curtain, and after some clamour and disturbance, was heard and dismissed with strong marks of approbation and ap-

plause, which continued throughout the whole of Richard, and at the end was reiterated." His address, or apology, was in these words;

"Ladies and gentlemen, I am sorry to be under the disagreeable, but just necessity of apologizing to you. I had no authority from the proprietors to be absent at the commencement of the season; but I certainly did not think that my services would be required the first night. A letter from the theatre indeed was sent, addressed to me, at Manchester; but I had previously left that place, and the letter did not reach me soon enough to enable me, by the utmost possible exertion on my part, to reach London in time for the opening. With the subsequent events that happened to me, you are already acquainted. I am exceedingly sorry to have been the involuntary cause of any disappointment; and though I may be unworthy of the patronage I have experienced, I shall not fail to exert my best abilities in your service."

We are told that Mr. Cooke delivered this address with great modesty and sensibility, and never played the character of Richard with more energy, discrimination, and effect,

than he did this evening; and we never doubted Mr. Cooke's talents as a player.

"This season," says Mr. Cooke, "I played Richard twelve nights; sometimes the play was acted on the same night at Drury-Lane, but they thought proper to resign the contest."

It was not until the twenty-seventh of November, that Mr. Cooke presented any novelty to the public, but on that night his performance of Stukely, in the tragedy of the Gamester, proved that his powers of delighting by new portraits of life were not exhausted, and that many additions might be made to his list of characters.

Mr. Palmer was the Stukely of the London boards when I visited England, and I remember seeing him in the character at Drury-Lane with Mr. Kemble's Beverly, and Mrs. Siddons's Mrs. Beverly, but the latter is the only one of the three, that I can recall with any degree of vividness or delight.

Many of those who saw Mr. Cooke's Stukely on this night, remembered Mr. Palmer's, but the comparison was altogether in favour of the former. In fact, Mr. Palmer's Stukely was a kind of high seasoned walking gentleman. Mr. Cooke's, the detestable,

cunning, malignant, cowardly, hypocritical scoundrel, from whom the soul recoiled, with that perfect aversion which makes the representation of vicious characters so subservient to the cause of virtue. Mr. Leigh Hunt, in his wish to represent Cooke as a comedian rather than a tragedian, endeavours to make Stukely a comedy character, and seems to class Stukely, Iago, and Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant together. Stukely in the Gamester is tragic, in the effects produced by his villany, but in the pursuit of his villany, he is merely grave or sentimental; and every thing like cheating has a principle of the ridiculous in it: ROCHEFOUCAULT perhaps would account for this, in the superiority which we give our own sagacity over the person cheated. With all Cooke's assumed meekness of countenance in this character, and in that of Iago, with his fits of thoughtfulness so inimitably familiar, and his sudden sighs of pitying and conviction, he is always greater as he approaches comedy, and his most finished performance is, in my opinion, Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant, in the "Man of the World." Though I shall perhaps agree with Mr. Hunt, when I come to the consideration of Mr. Cooke's Sir Pertinax, that it was his most *finished*

performance, I by no means agree with the preceding opinion, that "he is always greater as he approaches comedy." Mr. Cooke's true greatness, was in genuine tragedy. His exhibitions of the strongest and most malignant passions of human nature, and their frightful effects, both on their subject and on their objects, were truly tragic, and in that peculiar department of tragedy, placed him above all other actors.

"In the month of December, a short time before Christmas," says Mr. Cooke's chronicle, "at the desire of the managers of the Theatres Royal, Bath and Bristol, and permission and concurrence of Mr. Harris, I went and acted at those theatres five nights." At Bath he played Richard twice, and once at Bristol. He continues, "I received the greatest applause and approbation from the audiences, and every mark of politeness and attention from John Palmer, and William Dimond, Esq's. Mr. Elliston, now of Drury-Lane, was at the head of the company."

This gentleman had, previous to the visit of Mr. Cooke at Bath here recorded, played in London, and with great success, though not at the winter theatres. He was brought forward at the Hay-market Theatre, in the characters of

Octavian in "the Mountaineers," and Vapour in the farce of "My Grandmother." His Octavian was greatly admired, and followed, notwithstanding Mr. Kemble's high standing in that character, but another "frenzied character," by the same author, G. Colman the younger, established his fame in the most triumphant manner in London. This character was Sir Edward Mortimer, in "the Iron Chest," a comparatively bad play, founded on Mr. Godwin's fine novel of "Caleb Williams." The play, as got up at Drury-Lane with Mr. Kemble as the acting manager and the representative of Sir Edward had failed, and expired on the third night's representation; but under the management of its author, and with Mr. Elliston in the character of Sir E. Mortimer, it was revived, and attracted the attention of the town through a long and brilliant *run*. Mr. Hunt goes so far as to give his success at this time, and in this character, as evidence, that Mr. Elliston's "tragic genius is naturally equal, if not superior to that of Mr. Kemble;" "it must be recollected, that the extravagant character of Sir Edward Mortimer, which darts through every extreme of imagination and feeling, was condemned in its original representation by Kemble, and received with

enthusiasm, in its vivification by Elliston. Both these performers have their extremes in madness, but as Elliston's is the violent one, it is less opposite to the frenzied fancy of Mortimer. Mr. Kemble has too much method in his madness, and in his most fanciful speeches, he cannot forget his usual precise nod of the head, and preaching abstraction of delivery."

The success of Mr. Elliston at the summer theatre, induced Mr. Harris to offer him an engagement at Covent Garden, but his Bath situation interfering, an engagement was made for his playing once a fortnight in London, for a certain number of nights. Accordingly he passed from London to Bath, and from Bath to London, with such celerity of movement, as acquired him the appellation of the *Telegraph*, or fortnight actor. This arrangement was found mutually inconvenient, and after a few nights abandoned. He next season played at the Hay-market, and when Mr. Colman the younger, formed and executed his spirited plan of opening his theatre before the winter theatres closed, the managers of which had made their winter commence in September, extend through the spring, and continue through one third of

the summer, he obtained Mr. Elliston's services as acting manager, and principal performer.

Mr. Kemble's secession from Drury-Lane, paved the way to Mr. Elliston's high station at that theatre. He received offers from the proprietors, which the Bath managers enabled him to accept, by giving him up a year of his articled time, and he made his triumphal *entré* on the stage of New Drury-Lane, in Kotzebue's play of Pizarro, personating the romantic character of Rolla.

Mr. Elliston appears to stand with the English critics, only inferior to Cooke and Kemble in tragedy, and to Lewis in comedy, and superior to either in lovers of each description.

On the second of January, 1802, Mr. Cooke played, for the first time in London, *Jaques* in *As you Like It.* He was received with great applause, but the character is one which, although requiring a first rate actor to do justice to its beauties, gives no opportunity for the display of extraordinary talents.

On the fourth of January, the tragedy of *The Revenge* was performed, and Mr. Cooke personated *Zanga.* Here was a field for his talents, and they were displayed to advantage,

except in those passages which require that towering dignity, which Kemble possesses above all actors. In those scenes with Alonzo, which are so similar in their nature to the scenes of Iago with Othello, and in all the passages of marked passion, Mr. Cooke must of course excel; but a mask of soot should never conceal those features, on whose minute, as well as powerful workings, so much of the perfection of the representation depends.

Among some memoranda made by Mr. Cooke in 1798, I find the following remarks upon the tragedy of the Revenge. "The Revenge was written as an imitation of Othello, from a dislike of the Rev. author, Dr. Young, to the Moor's being an honest man, and the christian a villain, in the latter piece. Shakspeare, who knew the human heart a little better than the Rev. Doctor, convinced that villany is the growth of all climes, did not scruple, from an over-zeal, to plant the deepest malice in the heart of a subtle Italian. The scenes betwixt Alonza and Zanga, are very faint imitations of those between Othello and Iago; the famale characters still fainter of Desdemona and Emelia; and notwithstanding there are some poetical beauties

scattered through the play, it fails in representation, and can only keep attention awake throughout, by the representatives of the two principal characters being possessed of the first rate abilities."

In the character of Lear, which was played for the first time in London by Mr. Cooke, on the evening of January the eighth, he did not sink in the comparison with his great competitor of the other house. In *portions* of this character, Mr. Cooke showed that skill and vigorous conception, which made his acting so admirable; and *in all of it*, displayed his inimitably natural manner of delivering his author. I never shall forget the effect produced upon me by his tottering limbs, while sinking on his knee, to pronounce the terrible curse on his unnatural daughters; or by the passage itself as he gave it. Yet Mr. Cooke was not the rival of Garrick in the character of Lear.

It is but too plain, that the attractions of Mr. Cooke's great characters had abated, and that the new parts he appeared in this season did not make up the deficiency; and I have now to record, that he was degraded to being the representative of *Orsino*, in a new play, by M. G. Lewis, Esq. brought out at

Covent Garden, on the fifteenth of January, 1802, called "Alfonso, King of Castile." The bringing him forward in any new play, was an acknowledgment, on the part of the managers, that his attractions were lessened. And though this is the natural consequence of an actor's being much before the public, Mr. Cooke would keenly feel the change. Besides, to place him in a new play, and expose him in the same part, night after night, would not mend the matter. If this was not a reverse, it portended a reverse, and Mr. Cooke either had not from nature, or had lost by vile habits, that fortitude which would have enabled him to rise with the storm of adversity; on the contrary, he gave way to a morbid sensibility, which drove him to drown in oblivious draughts, his cares and his ambition.

On the twenty-fourth of February, Mr. Cooke had his second benefit in London. The amount was four hundred and nine pounds, thirteen and six-pence. He says, "this season, also, Mr. Harris gave me my night entirely clear, and I signed another article for three years, after the expiration of the third year of my first article, and was immediately put upon a salary of fourteen

guineas a week. I left the matter to Mr. Lewis, who fixed it at that sum." This was highly honourable in Mr. Harris, and complimentary to Mr. Cooke, and ought to have been sufficient to have kept him up to that high and honourable behaviour, which should comport with the high estimation in which his manager and friend had proved that he held him. He proceeds, "This season I took the first part of Henry the IVth, and for the first time in London acted Falstaff. I have several times repeated it, with the Falstaffs of the second part, and the Merry Wives of Windsor, but never could please myself, or come up to my own ideas in any of them." This opinion of the parts, and of himself, is very honourable to Mr. Cooke. He has likewise told me, that he remembered Henderson, the best of Falstaffs, and endeavoured to profit by the remembrance. Whatever his own opinion was of his performance of this character, it is certain that he had no living competitor, and that those who never saw Henderson or Cooke, can form no adequate idea of Falstaff.

On the tenth of April, 1802, for the benefit of Mr. Lewis, Mr. Cooke played for the first time in London, that character which

has been considered as his most finished exhibition of his art, Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant, in the "Man of the World." This play, which had sunk to rest, when the talents of its author ceased to enliven it by his acting in the principal character, was now aroused, not to sleep again, until Cooke should sleep the sleep of death.

CHAP. XI.

Memoirs of Macklin—Love-a-la-Mode—The Man of the World—Mr. Cooke's Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant.

AS an actor, as an author, and as the man who preceded Mr. Cooke in three of his best characters, Mr. Charles Macklin is entitled to the attention of Mr. Cooke's biographer and admirers.

Charles McLaughlin, for such was his real name, was the son of William McLaughlin, an officer who commanded a troop of horse under the Bigot James, at the battle of the Boyne, and was at that period two months old, for he was born the 1st of May, 1690.

The father's loyalty was the cause of the son's poverty, and probably of his celebrity. It was not until he was sixteen or eighteen years of age, that the mother of Charles, his father being dead, could send him to a school, which school, happily for the world, was kept by a Scotchman, who by his tyranny implanted that prejudice in the breast of his pupil, which at a future period produced Sir Archy M'Sarcasm, and Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant. Macklin's accuracy likewise in the Scotch accent, and peculiar phraseology, had probably its foundation in the study of this same Scotchman, with whom he waged incessant and open war, until his restless and daring spirit prompted him to quit school, his mother, and his country, and seek his fortune in London.

Accompanied by two young men older than himself, but equally imprudent, he arrived in London, and was rescued from extreme poverty, by accidentally meeting with a woman who had once been a servant to his mother, who introduced him to a widow that kept a public house. Charles made himself so agreeable and useful to the widow, that after a short time she made him the master of her fortune and person, by marriage. His

mother, however, having received intelligence of his situation, had him, by force of a plea of non-age, wrested from the arms of the widow, and sent back to Ireland.

Macklin being now introduced into college as a Badge-man, acquired some literature, but at the age of twenty-one, again left Ireland, for the purpose of going to Germany with his uncle O'Flanaghan, a captain in the Austrian service, and of entering the career of military glory. Charles, however, got no further than London, when leaving his uncle, he joined a company of strollers, and immersed himself in all the variety of vice and adventure, which such an alliance led to.

His mother's tenderness, and the exertions of a friend, rescued Charles once more from the dregs of society, and he was restored to his situation of *Badge-man* of Trinity college. At the age of twenty-six, he once more broke from all the restraints, which his duties and his mother's tenderness laid upon him, and crossing to England, became permanently a player, continuing to move in obscurity, until the year 1734, when he had attained his fortieth year, and was brought into notice by Fleetwood, as his assistant manager,

and gained some reputation in comic parts of the lower order.

Mr. Kirkman, the biographer of Macklin, gives an anecdote as related by Macklin, in the year 1787, which is so characteristic of the man, that I will insert it.

An acquaintance asked him, in a Coffee-house, "If Quin and he had ever quarrelled? Many persons in the adjoining boxes attended to the veteran," then ninety-seven years of age, "who spoke as usual in a very audible voice, but exhibited, in the course of the narration, (as the reader will perceive,) strong proofs of the rapid decay of his memory: 'Yes, Sir; I was very low in the theatre as an actor, when the surly fellow was the despot of the place. But, Sir, I had—had a lift, Sir. Yes, I was to play—the—the—the boy with the red breeches;—you know whom I mean, Sir—he whose mother is always going to law;—you know who I mean!—'

'*Jerry Blackacre*, I suppose, Sir.

'Aye, Sir—Jerry—Well, Sir, I began to be a little known to the public, and egad, I began to make them laugh;—I was called the *Wild Irishman*, Sir; and was thought to have some fun in me, and I made them laugh heartily, in the boy, Sir—in Jerry. When I came

off the stage, the surly fellow, who played the scolding Captain in the play. Captain—Captain—you know who I mean—'

Manly, I believe, Sir.

'Aye, Sir—the same—Manly. Well, Sir, the surly fellow began to scold me, and told me I was at my *damned tricks;* and that there was no having a chaste scene for me.—Every body, nay, egad, the manager himself, was afraid of him.—I was afraid of the fellow, too; but not much.—Well, Sir, I told him, that I did not mean to disturb *him* by my acting; but to *show off a little myself.* Well, Sir, in the other scenes I did the same, and made the audience laugh incontinently—and he scolded me again, Sir.—I made the same apology; but the surly fellow would not be appeased. Again, Sir, however, I did the same; and when I returned to the green-room, he abused me like a pick-pocket, and said I must leave off my *damned tricks.*—I told him I could play no otherwise. He said I *could* and I *should.* Upon which, Sir, egad, I said to him flatly—" you lie." He was chewing an apple at the moment, and spitting the contents into his hand, he threw them into my face.'

Indeed.

'It is a fact, Sir;—Well, Sir, I went up to him directly, (for I was a great *boxing cull* in those days,) and pushed him down into a chair, and pummeled his face damnably.'

You did right, Sir.

'He strove to resist, but he was no match for me;—and I made his face swell so with the blows, that he could hardly speak. When he attempted to go on with his part, Sir, he mumbled so, that the audience began to hiss. Upon which he went forward and told them, Sir, that something unpleasant had happened, and that he was really ill. But, Sir, the moment I went to strike him, there were many noblemen in the green-room, full dressed with their swords and large wigs, (for the green-room was a kind of a state-room, then, Sir,)—Well, they were all alarmed, and jumped upon the benches, waiting in silent amazement, till the affair was over. At the end of the play, Sir, he told me I must give him satisfaction; and that when he changed his dress, he would wait for me at the Obelisk, in Covent Garden. I told him I would be with him:—but, Sir, when he was gone, I recollected that I was to play in the pantomime, (for I was a great pantomime boy in

those days;) so, Sir, I said to myself, "damn the fellow, let him wait; I won't go to him till my business is all over; let him fume and fret, and be damned."—Well, Sir, Mr. Fleetwood, the manager, who was one of the best men in the world—all kindness, and mildness, and graciousness, and affability—had heard of the affair; and as Quin was his great actor, and in favour with the town, he told me I had revenge enough, that I should not meet the surly fellow that night; but that he would make the matter up some how or other. Well, Sir, Mr. Fleetwood ordered me a good supper, and some wine, and made me sleep at his house all night, to prevent any meeting. Well, Sir, in the morning, he told me, that I must, *for his sake*, make a little apology to Quin, for what I had done.—And so, Sir, having given him a belly full, I, to oblige Mr. Fleetwood, (for I loved the man,) did, Sir, make some apology to him, and the matter dropped."

On the the 10th of May, 1735, Macklin was the unfortunate cause, in a sudden gust of ungoverned passion, of the death of Mr. Thomas Hallam, the uncle of Mr. Lewis Hallam, so well known in this country, and of Mrs. Mattocks, so deservedly admired in Eng-

land. He had passionately struck, or pushed, at Hallam with a stick which happened to be in his hand, and which entering his left eye, caused his death: a terrible lesson to those who indulge their gusts of irritation: I say indulge, for there is no person who cannot subdue the propensity to furious rage. I know it by long observation, and have noted the meanness, as well as folly, of what are called passionate people, who, when they tyrannize over, and act like demons towards inferiors, plead that they cannot govern their tempers; yet toward superiors, in fortune or power, find no difficulty attending the task. Macklin was tried for murder, but was justly acquitted of that charge, and brought in guilty of manslaughter.

In the year 1741, Mr. Macklin expelled from the stage Lord Landsdown's alteration of Shakspeare, entitled *The Jew of Venice*, by his taste in reviving the original play, *The Merchant of Venice*, and by his great and new representation of Shylock. This event stamped his character as an actor, and placed him on an eminence from which he never descended.

From this time, until the 20th of December, 1753, when he was in the 64th year of

his age, Macklin buffetted the storms which agitate the theatric world, (many of which, if not raised by him, were increased by his unbending temper,) with various fortunes, and then retired from the stage, and became keeper of a Coffee-house, and theatrical lecturer. This scheme failing, he joined the stage again, and in 1759 presented his farce of "Love-a-la-Mode" to the managers of Drury-Lane Theatre. Mr. Garrick, without rejecting, gave his opinion against it, and of course influenced the opinions of many others, in and out of the theatre; but the sturdy veteran, confident in his strength, moved on to victory and triumph.

The extreme simplicity of plot in this excellent little drama, will be shown by the few words in which it may be fully explained.

An honest Irishman, a Jew-broker beau, a designing Scot, and an English jockey, are attracted to the house of a young lady's guardian, by the charms of her person or fortune. To try their sincerity, the guardian reports the sudden loss of her property, and they all prove mercenary but the Irishman.

This simple plot is conducted with perfect skill, and the characters of the suitors boldly and humorously depicted. The satire is fine

and just, except where it is national, and the only fault of the piece is the partial compliment to the author's country, at the expense of its more civilized neighbours. Scotchmen were hated by Macklin, for his old tutor Nicholson's sake, and he has raised in his characters of Sir Archy M'Sarcasm, and Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant, two monuments to his genius, his prejudice, and his injustice. The inhabitants of Scotland, however, instead of being offended, are the first to enjoy the representation of these two characters; and by showing that they do not feel the intended satire, they deprive it of its point, and make it altogether general.

The success of "Love-a-la-Mode" equalled its simplicity, and its merit; and it continues to this day, a most popular after-piece, and must so continue while there is any true taste left among those who call the English language their native tongue.

In 1761, Macklin produced his comedy of *the Married Libertine*. In 1764, the "True-born Irishman," a farce. The first of these remains unpublished, and is unknown; the second is a popular drama. During the season of 1765—6, he brought out his *chef*

Pouvre, The Man of the World, of which I shall presently speak at some length.

In 1767, Macklin, who had been some time in Dublin, returned to London, and his farce of *the True-born Irishman* was brought out at Covent Garden, under the title of *the Irish Fine Lady*, and condemned.

In 1769, died the mother of Charles Macklin, in the ninety-ninth year of her age.

On the twenty-fourth of February, 1775, Mr. Macklin tried his cause in the King's Bench, and triumphed over the conspiracy which had been formed, to drive him from the stage.

At Covent-Garden theatre, under his own superintendance, Macklin brought out his comedy of the "Man of the World," on the 10th of May, 1781, for the first time in England, and played himself the arduous part of Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant.

The writer saw this wonderful instance of strength and longevity, in the years 1785 and 1786, in the characters of Shylock, Sir Archy M'Sarcasm, and Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant, when he was in the ninety-sixth and ninety-seventh years of his age. In Sir Pertinax, he lost his recollection, and a pause ensued, which was filled up by the deafening

and encouraging plaudits of a crowded audience. He played this character for the last time, in 1789, when he was in his hundredth year. The last attempt he made on the stage, was the seventh of May, 1789, in Shylock. He went through the first act, but failed in the second, and requested that the remainder might be read. The proposal was accepted, and the poor old man took his last farewell of the stage, amidst the encouragement and affecting plaudits of the crowd, who literally filled the theatre.

Mr. Charles Macklin died the eleventh day of July, 1797, aged 107 years, 2 months, and 10 days.

It is time that I return to Mr. Cooke, whose playing for Mr. Lewis's benefit, and for the first time in London, his most finished character in comedy, gave rise to this digression. His great success in Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant, though anticipated from his representation of Sir Archy, gave an eclat to his second season in London, and raised him again to that proud eminence, from which he had a little declined.

Before I speak of Mr. Cooke's merits in the character of Sir Pertinax, I will give a concise review of the comedy of " the Man

of the World;" a comedy that shines as one of the few jewels of the modern English stage.

This play has a noble simplicity in the construction of its fable, which adds not a little in giving it that elegantly finished appearance, which few modern dramas can boast. Its author, in his plot, strictly adheres to the unities; and though I perfectly coincide in opinion with Doctor Johnson, in his defence of Shakspeare, and think they may be dispensed with; yet if the fable can be made to bend to the laws of time and place, nature and probability are more strictly adhered to, the author evinces greater skill in an otherwise equally well-conducted story, and the impression is more vivid and more lasting upon the auditor.

The place of this comedy lies in one chamber of Sir Pertinax's country seat, a few miles from London; yet every scene occurs naturally in this one chamber; and a plot, sufficient to keep attention alive through five acts, is begun and finished on this spot, without imagining more time than is occupied in the acting, and a short interval between the acts.

The story is simple and well told. There is no episode, no character introduced unne

cessary to the plot, nor a phrase which is not necessary to the conduct of the fable, or the true delineation of the characters.

The impertinence of Betty; the dignified morality of Sidney; and even his love for Constantia; the tender loveliness of Constantia; the assumed levity of lady Rhodolpha; the manly, honest patriotism of Egerton; the stupid sensuality of Lord Lumbercourt; the yielding timidity of lady M'Sycophant; the parental and soldierly warmth of Melville; and the cringing cupidity of the brace of lawyers, are all necessary to the construction of the plot, and to the developement of the great character, to which all points, and in which all hinges, Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant, the Man of the World; or, (as Macklin first called it,) the "True-born Scotchman."

It follows from what I have said, that the dialogue is good; for that dialogue, whose every phrase tends to the developement of the plot, or the characters, must be good. And as the plot is a fine satire upon the mean, servile, mercenary, selfish, purse-proud, insolent, ignorant, hypocritical worldling; so the dialogue is humorous, sarcastic, and satirical, or by contrast elegant, witty, tender, moral, dignified.

As a specimen of the first, I will select a part of Betty's scene with Sidney, in the first act, when, after eagerly endeavouring to ruin the reputation of Constantia, by hints, insinuations, and open accusation, she proceeds:

"For indeed, Sir, I am no busy-body, nor do I love fending or proving; and I assure you, Sir, I hate all tittling, and tattling, and gossipping, and backbiting, and taking away a person's character.

Sidney. I observe you do, Mrs. Betty.

Betty. I do indeed, Sir; I am the farthest from it of any person in the world.

Sidney. I dare say you are.

Betty. I am indeed, Sir; and so, Sir, your humble servant"

And Sir Pertinax's reply in the second act to Egerton's assertion, that he does not know how to behave at a levee, which is both humorous and satirical.

"Zounds, Sir! do you not see what others do? gentle and simple, temporal and spiritual, lords and members, judges, generals, and bishops; aw crowding, bustling, pushing foremost intil the middle of the circle, and there, waiting, watching, and striving, to catch a luock, or a smile, fra the great mon; *which they meet with an amicable risibeelity*

of aspect, a modest cadence of body, and a *conceeliating co-operation of the whole mon.;* which expresses an offeecious promptitude for his service, and indicates, that they luock upon themselves as the suppliant appendages of his power, and the enlisted Swiss of his poleetical fortune; this, Sir, is what ye ought to do; and this, Sir, is what I never once omitted for these five and tharty years, let wha would be meenister."

I would instance likewise Lord Lumbercourt's relation of his arrest, with his comments, and Sir Pertinax's assenting irony; and lady Rhodolpha's description of the motley company at Bath, which concludes with the "Jew distilling the Beeshop's brains." But, above all, the admirable scene, in which Sir Pertinax relates his progress to fortune, by *booing*. To select passages of humour and satire, is, however, rather an useless task, when we consider that the whole dialogue of Sir Pertinax is composed of these ingredients.

As instances of the moral and dignified, I will point out generally the answers which Egerton and Sidney make to the base propositions of Sir Pertinax, and particularly the

part which Sidney maintains, in the following dialogue.

"*Sir Pertinax.* What do you mean, Sir? is asking ye til serve a friend wi a wench an indignity? Sir, am I not your patron, and benefactor, ha?

Sidney. You are, Sir, and I feel your bounty at my heart; but the virtuous gratitude, that sowed the deep sense of it there, does not inform me, that in return, the tutor's sacred function, or the social virtue of the man, must be debased into the pupil's pandor, or the patron's prostitute.

Sir Pertinax. Hoow! What, Sir, do ye dispute? are ye na my dependent! ha! and do ye heesitate aboot an ordinary civeelity, which is practised every day by men and women of the first fashion? Sir, let me tell ye, however nice ye may be, there is na a dependent aboot the court, that would na jump at sic an opportunity, till oblige his patron.

Sidney. Indeed, Sir, I believe the doctrine of pimping for patrons, may be learned in every party-school; for where faction and public venality are taught as measures necessary to the prosperity of the Briton, and the patriot; there, every vice is to be expected.

Sir Pertinax. Oho! Oho! vary weel! fine insinuations! I ken what you glance at; yes, ye intend this satire as a slander upon meenisters; ay! ay! fine sideetion against government; Oh, ye villan—ye—ye—sirrah, ye are a black sheep, and I'll mark ye, and represent ye; I'll draw your picture—Ah! ah! I'm glad you show yoursel—yas, yas—ye ha taken off the mask at last, ye ha been in my service for many years, ye hypocrite! ye imposter! but I never knew your preenciples before.

Sidney. Sir, you never affronted them before; if you had, you should have known them sooner.

Sir Pertinax. I ha done wi ye—I ha done wi ye. Ay, ay, noow I can account for my son's conduct; his aversion till courts, till mecnisters, levees, public beesiness, and his disobedience till my commands—a perfeedious fellow—ye're a Judas! ye ha ruin'd the morals of my son, ye villain; but I ha done wi ye; however this I weell prophesy at our parting, for your comfort, that guin ye air so very squeemish in obliging your patron; ye'll never rise in the church.

Sidney. Though my conduct, Sir, should not make me rise in her power, I am sure it

will in her favour; in the favour of my own conscience too, and in the esteem of all worthy men; and that, Sir, is a power and dignity beyond what patrons of any denomination can confer."

I will not indulge myself in making further extracts from this excellent comedy, in support of the opinion I have given; I hope the reader will be induced to examine it, and judge of its merits for himself.

This comedy was first brought out at the Crow-street theatre, Dublin, under its original title of "the True-born Scotchman," in the season of 1765—6.

In the year 1779, Macklin sent his comedy to the Lord Chamberlain's office in London, and that officer refused to license it.—This seemed a little like taking the charge of venality home. The license was not only refused, but the copy detained. Macklin was not a man to submit to injustice, and his spirited conduct obtained not only the copy, but a license, after changing the name, and expunging a few passages.

"Macklin performed Sir Pertinax himself, and so excellently, (says Mrs. Inchbald,) that it was imagined he could never be surpassed, by any other representative of this

Scotch politician. Cooke, his successor, has proved the falsity of this conjecture. Macklin performed Sir Pertinax most excellently, but Cooke performs Sir Pertinax with talents as pre-eminent as Macklin displayed above all others in the character of Shylock."—Meaning, I presume, all who had preceded him.

To point out particular beauties in Mr. Cooke's Sir Pertinax, would be extremely difficult, because all was perfect. Where the author was best, there likewise the actor was most excellent, not because he played better in that passage, but because more of his skill and power were necessary from its nature. "You may see," says Mr. Hunt, "all the beauties, and all the faults of Cooke, in this single character; and this proves, perhaps, that it is his favourite one, since he feels inclined to indulge all his habits in its representation. The Scotch dialect, which he so inimitably assumes, is in vain undervalued by those who persuade themselves that he was born in Scotland. In the first place, to be merely born there, is nothing to the purpose; for a man born upon the sea, might as well be expected to talk like a dolphin. If he was educated by, or with Scotch people,

it is merely wonderful, that he does not talk Scotch in his English characters, for he gives them none of those compressed vowels, and liquified consonants; none of that artlessness, and undulation of tone, so ludicrous in Sir Pertinax. It is this artlessness of tone, that renders a hypocritical Scotchman, or Welchman, more humorous on the stage than any other hypocrite, and more successful perhaps in the world. Sir Pertinax, however, conceals an unavoidable ludicrousness, which might sometimes injure his cause, by apparently delighting in his dialect, and by possessing much intentional humour. If COOKE bows, it is with a face that says, 'What a fool you are, to be deceived with this fawning!' If he looks friendly, it is with a smile that says, 'I will make use of you, and you may go to the devil.' A simple rustic might feel all his affections warmed at his countenance, and exclaim, 'What a pure-hearted old gentleman!' but a fine observer would descry under the glowing exterior, nothing but professions without meaning, and a heart without warmth.

"The Sarcasm of COOKE, is at all times most bitter, but in this character, its acerbity is tempered with no respect, either for its ob-

ject or for himself. His tone is outrageously smooth and deep; and when it finds its softest level, its under monotony is so full of what is called hugging one's self, and is accompanied with such a dragged smile, and viciousness of leer, that he seems as if he had lost his voice, through the mere enjoyment of malice.

It is thus, that in characters of the most apparent labour, as well as in a total neglect of study, this excellent actor surpasses all his contemporaries. His principal faults are confined to his person, for they consist in a monotonous gesture, and a very aukward gait. His shrinking rise of the shoulders, however, may give an idea of that contracted watchfulness with which a mean hypocrite retires into himself. His general air, indeed, his sarcastic cast of countenance, with its close wideness of smile, and its hooked nose, and his utter want of study, joined to the villanous characters he represents, are occasionally sufficient to make some people almost fall out with the actor."

This is just criticism, and high and deserved praise; the most flattering, perhaps, is the assertion, that "all the faults of Cooke," may be seen "in this single character;" for with

all his faults, it must be considered as approaching very near to

"That perfect monster, which the world ne'er saw."

The neglect of study in Mr. Cooke, at least such study as is necessary to create excellence in other men, is a curious fact in his history; and one of the most extraordinary *traits* in the character of this extraordinary man, is that ability which he possessed, of seizing the perfect image of the person he would represent, and identifying it with his own feelings, so as to express every emotion designed by the author, as if that emotion was his own. And all this as if by intuition, for nobody knows of his studying, except in that hasty and desultory manner, which his journal at times indicates. But his perception was uncommonly quick, and his earlier observations on men and their passions, must have been uncommonly accurate.

I have before observed, that in seeing actors, their faults were lessons to him; and suggested, by a representation of the false, what the true must be. His perception of the natural, and his power of separating it from the artificial, must have been originally very great; and, as a friend highly distinguished in *our* literary world, most inge-

niously remarked to me, Cooke, when he improved his own playing, by what he had seen excellent in other players, did not imitate those players, but only seized what he saw natural in them, and made it his own in his own manner.

CHAP. XII.

Mr. Cooke plays Falstaff in the Merry Wives *—Sir Edward Mortimer—attempts to play Orsino, but is indisposed—Plays Bajazet —Leaves London, and proceeds to Manchester—Chester—Birmingham—Visits the house and the grave of Shakspeare, at Stratford upon Avon—Plays at Plymouth, and Plymouth Dock—Goes to Bristol— Mr. Cooke's journal of thirty days, at Bath and Bristol—Mr. M. G. Lewis's Alfonso— Returns to London—Plays Hamlet.*

ABOUT this time, Mr. Cooke paid a second visit to Bath and Bristol, by permission of Mr. Harris, and played a night at each place. He likewise took what he calls, "a flying excursion" to Portsmouth, and played Richard two nights out of four.

On the 28th of April, he played for the first time in London, Falstaff, in the "Merry Wives of Windsor." This Falstaff is known to be inferior to the Falstaff of "The first part of Henry the Fourth," therefore it is to be presumed that Cooke did not increase his reputation by playing the worse, after having played the better character. He was, however, highly and deservedly applauded.

Mr. Fawcett took for his benefit on the 7th of May, Colman the younger's drama of "the Iron Chest," in which Mr. Cooke played Sir Edward Mortimer, a character unsuited to his talents and appearance, and by comparison with Kemble and Elliston, injurious to his reputation with "the million."

On the 11th of the same month, he for the first time in London, disappointed the public, by what is called "indisposition." The night was for the benefit of Mr. and Mrs. H. Johnson. The play was *Alfonso*. He came on the stage after an apology, which stated that he was so much indisposed, as scarcely to be able to dress for the part of *Orsino*.

He attempted to play—was hiss'd—and after a few speeches, was obliged to declare that he could not proceed, and immediately to leave the stage.

It was intended that he should perform *Major Oakley*, in Colman's excellent comedy of the *Jealous Wife*, on the 19th of May, but "Mr. Cooke's indisposition continuing," another performer played the part. I shall make no remarks on this subject at present.

On the third of June, Mr. Cooke performed Bajazet for the first time in London, on the benefit-night of Mrs. Litchfield, and was justly admired; but there is not in the play of "Tamerlane," that great requisite which would enable a true actor to shine—*Nature*.

On Saturday the twelfth of June, Mr. Cooke again visited Bath, and played Richard, for the benefit of the Bath Theatrical Fund.

A few nights before Covent Garden Theatre closed for the season, Mr. Cooke, on Sunday the 20th of June, 1802, left London for Manchester, where he was received as usual, the Manchester men looking upon him as their *protegé*.

On the second of July, Mr. Kemble set out on a tour of the continent, never more to play on the boards of Drury-Lane Theatre.

July the fourth, Mr. Cooke proceeded from Manchester to Chester, for the first time since being engaged in London; he

played here 6 nights. "On the eleventh (of July,) says he, I left that city, and after travelling all night, arrived to breakfast at Birmingham; afterwards went to bed, and in the evening was so ill, I was unable to play Richard, as advertised for that night."

Here I am obliged to suspect that my hero was "at his old tricks again." He played at Birmingham 8 nights, and took Hamlet for his benefit.

He proceeds in his journal to tell us, "On Wednesday the 28th, proceeded to Stratford upon Avon. I visited the house and room wherein Shakspeare was born; and afterwards viewed the church, and the place of interment, of him, and some of his family. His monument is a very clumsy, inelegant bust. In the house, upon a large sheet of paper, is inscribed a sort of genealogical table of his family, commencing with his grandfather, and bringing it down to 1793, when the last descendant is mentioned, as many before him, of the name of Hart. They also show a chair he sat in, and some other trifles. The house he built, when he retired to his native spot, was pulled down some time ago, and the Bank now stands upon the scite of it." Wealth

does sometimes usurp the place of genius. "Proceeded to Oxford; after straying about an hour in Blenheim Park, took a slight view of the city, and next day arrived at the Bath Hotel, Piccadilly. On Sunday afternoon, August the first, left London, travelled all night, and arrived at Salisbury to breakfast. It being assize time, there was scarcely a room to sit down in. Visited Stonehenge, and the town of Amesbury. I think the former a Druidical remain. There has been so much written, and some of it so accurate and descriptive, of the various places I have mentioned, that I shall not attempt to add my observations at present. Perhaps, as I intend to keep a regular journal, at least for one year, I may, in future, be more diffuse. Left Salisbury, and slept at Dorchester, and the next night reached Exeter. Visited the theatre, where I met with Mr. Bannister, and Mr. Dowton, of Drury Lane. Also visited the Cathedral, as I had done that of Salisbury. On Thursday, the 5th, set out for Plymouth, but, by the breaking of a wheel of my chaise, was obliged to remain all night, at a small town named Chudleigh. Next day, I proceeded to Ashburton, and Joey Bridge,

where, the house being full, I dined in the Garden. This seems a pleasant picturesque village. In the evening, arrived at Plymouth. The descriptions of the harbours of Plymouth, and Dock, with the barracks at Stonehouse, &c. have been often noticed. On Saturday, I dined at Saltram Inn, on the estate of Lord Barrington, which is very agreeably situated, and about 4 miles from Plymouth. I also visited Mount Edgecombe. I played 8 nights at Plymouth, and 4 at Dock—Richard twice at each place."

He says in another manuscript, that he went from Birmingham to "Plymouth and Plymouth Dock, (Mr. Foote manager.) At these two theatres I played Richard *four nights successively.*"

He proceeds, "On Saturday, the 28th, left Plymouth: at Exeter was obliged to wait on the Mayor, to complain of the insolence of the people at the old London Inn. Late at night, left the new London Inn, and about one in the morning arrived at Cullompton. Next day, travelled by the way of Wellington, Taunton, (a handsome town,) Bridgewater, and Cross, to Bristol, where I arrived at half past nine in the evening, at the Talbot Inn,

Bath-street. On Monday, removed to No. 50, Queen's Square, and that evening played Richard, to a full and brilliant audience. Since I arrived in England, I have acted Richard sixty-four nights."

Mr. Foote, the Plymouth manager, above mentioned, announced Cooke's engagement, by the following extraordinary advertisement, prefixed to his bills.

"Mr. Cooke's fame in London is established as high as Garrick's, Mossop's, Barry's, or any other actor's in the world, by his most surprizing, and inimitable performances of the following characters; and he is engaged, (at at a very great expense,) to represent them on this stage, *viz.* Richard, Macbeth, Shylock, Sir Giles Overreach, Sir Archy M'Sarcasm, and Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant, which will be the utmost limit of his engagement."

On the 30th of July, Mr. Cooke was advertised to play at Margate, for four nights, to commence that evening with Shylock. In the morning a letter was received, stating that he was unwell, and could not play at Margate. The manager, however, managed to keep the letter to himself, until he had got his house full of people, who came to see Cooke, and then all they heard of

him was his letter. The reader has already seen, by his journal, that he was very contentedly journeying at this time from Oxford to London, which he left again on the 1st of August.

We have seen Mr. Cooke safely lodged in Queen's Square, Bristol, on the thirtieth day of August, 1802, and two days after, he commenced a journal, which he continued steadily for thirty days. As this is one of the most regular, and continuous efforts of the kind that he ever made, and as it is characteristic, though certainly it is not his *confessions*, I will present the whole of it to the reader, *verbatim*.

"BRISTOL, QUEEN'S SQUARE, SEPT. 1st, 1802.

"*Wednesday, September*, 1802.

"Arose between six and seven. Wrote until near nine; dressed, and breakfasted; walked to three Carrier's Inns, to inquire for a trunk I sent off from Plymouth last week. Sauntered about the city; purchased two books, and some fruit; went to the theatre, and ran through the part of Macbeth—dined about two—read in "The New Bristol Guide." Some time after five, went to the theatre, and played Macbeth. The play not very correct; Mr. Harris, who, with a part

of his family, was present, came into the Green-room, at the end of the fourth act, and in the course of a short conversation, gave me permission to be absent the first night of the ensuing season, at Covent Garden. Returned home, supped, and read in the "Guide." Received two letters; went to bed about half past eleven."

"*Thursday, Sept. 2d.*

"Arose between six and seven. Employed some time in writing: altered and marked the first edition of the tragedy of Alfonso, from the prompt-book of the theatre. Read the letters I received the evening before: one from Mr. Hutchinson, a painter, at Bath; the other, from a lady, who I received one from while at Plymouth, and by a strange mistake, addressed the answer to her husband. I shall neither answer the lady, nor Mr. H. Breakfasted, and dressed; at half past eleven, went to the theatre, and rehearsed Orsino, or rather, read it, as I have almost forgotten every line of it. Visited the wardrobe; went to the fruit-market; read in the "Bristol Guide;" took a short walk; dined at four, and afterwards went to St. James's Fair, held in the large church-yard, belonging

to that parish. There are several rows of shops laid out, and a variety of places for the amusement of the visitors. Dropt two shillings at one, and six-pence at another, and deemed the last the best. Returned home, supped, and went to bed about eleven. I glanced through the "Guide," but have had little opportunity of visiting the places described. The writer seems to be warm in the description of, I suppose, his native city. He gives it a preference over any other part of the kingdom, and places it next to London, in point of consequence. In foreign trade, extent, and increase of population, Liverpool has long gone before it, and still keeps increasing. The book, however, must prove very useful to strangers, as it contains a list of bankers, regulation of posts, stage-coaches, &c. and only costs half a crown; whereas a trifling, flimsy publication, enlarged with a few paltry plates, professing to be a history of Clifton Hotwells, and vicinity, with a description of their natural beauties, is *three* times the price, and does not contain one article of useful information, that is not to be found in the other. There is a vein of affectation, and puppyism runs through the whole, although the title-page says, by G. W. Manby, Esq."

"*Friday, Sept. 3d.*

"Arose about half past seven; employed some time in writing; looked into "The Guide." Took a sauntering walk on the Quay, &c. Went into St. Stephen's Church, but it being during morning service, could not inspect it. It has a handsome square tower with pinnacles, a carved front, and the altar and pulpit finished magnificently; the latter is crowned with a mitre, and, as well as the pews, of mahogany. A particular account of this, and the other churches in the city, are in "The Guide." At eleven, went to the theatre, and rehearsed Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant and Sir Archy M'Sarcasm. About half past two, dined; had the company of Mr. Glassington, prompter of Covent Garden Theatre. In the evening played Orsino and Sir Archy. I do not think I ever played Orsino better. This is my first, and, as yet, only original part in London. The play is the production of M. G. Lewis, Esq. M. P. author of the Castle Spectre, and the notorious romance of the Monk. This gentleman's imagination seems entirely taken up with murders, ghosts, old castles, and ancient Spanish ballads. There is certainly some

good writing in Alfonso, but both fable and construction are miserably bad. It abounds with so many improbabilities, and even impossibilities, that to point them out, would be an endless task. It is a sanguinary tale, for the four principal characters die violent deaths. One lady poisons another, and is stabbed by her lover, who, after mortally wounding his father in battle *by mistake*, stabs himself, and leaves a half dead king behind to mourn the catastrophe. The author, resolving to be singular in every respect, published his play with a conceited, impertinent preface, *before* it was acted; and the last act, materially different from the licensed manuscript. It struggled through nine nights to tolerable audiences, partly procured through the interest of the author, and went to rest for the remainder of the season—I hope for ever, at least as long as I remain in the theatre.

"In the farce, the part of Mordecai was most shamefully mangled by a whistling monkey-looking thing of the name of Treby.

"Returned home, supped, and went to bed sometime after midnight."

"*Saturday, Sept. 4th.*

"Arose a little before nine, somewhat indisposed; breakfasted, looked into "The Guide;" dressed, employed some time in writing an account of the preceding day; wrote to Mr. H. Johnstone, at Plymouth—went to the post office; purchased last month's list of the army—about one took a slight repast, and at two, set out in a chaise, with Mr. Charlton, acting-manager, for Bath. After our arrival, took a short walk; drank tea in my dressing-room; played Orsino and Sir Archy. The audience numerous and brilliant—was introduced by Mr. Dimond to Mr. Wroughton, of Drury-Lane Theatre.—During the performance, was visited by Mr. Walmsly, landscape painter, at Bath, with whom I promised to dine on Thursday next. Returned, with the addition of Mr. Egan to our company, and arrived at Bath a little before one.—Received a letter which had been sent from London, addressed 'George Cooke, Esq. Post office, Plymouth,' and from thence transmitted to Bristol, and left at my lodgings; upon a slight inspection, it does not seem to have reached the person intended. Supped and went to bed about two, A. M."

" *Sunday, Sept. 5th.*

" Being much fatigued, breakfasted in bed, and arose about eleven—looked into a novel, and the army list—dressed; spent some time in writing; the letter I received last night was not for me, re-altered the address, re-closed it, and carried it to the post office—went to the Cathedral, (which I had visited once before,) and heard a considerable part of the sermon by the Dean. He observed, that the nearer we draw to the close of life, the more we are convinced of the vanity and folly of our wishes, and expectations; true, but trite.—He seemed earnestly to inculcate meekness and humility, the basis of the Christian doctrine; and is a pulpit orator much superior to many I have heard.—The altar was prepared for the administration of the Sacrament by the Dean, and two assistants, but the number of communicants was very small, and those mostly females—Walked in the cloisters, the Abbey green, and the Church yard of St. Augustines—Went to the Talbot Inn, and ordered a pair of horses for Bath on Tousday next, at twelve o'clock; returned home, and looked into " The Guide." Before I quitted the cathe-

dral, stood on the grave of the late celebrated actor, Mr. William Powell, and looked at his monument. He died July 3d, 1769, aged 33 years,—his epitaph of 10 lines, was furnished by the late George Colman, Esq. I could not help observing, by the inscriptions and epitaphs, the number of natives or visitors of the West India Islands, buried here. From the connexion of Bristol with that part of the world, and the vicinity of Clifton, Hotwells, the waters of which are reputed efficacious in those disorders peculiar to that climate, we may account for this place being the grave of so many, either whom fate placed in that unhealthy clime, or avarice, and the hopes of honours and riches, drew from more salubrious and kindly earth and skies. In the "Bristol Guide," is a copy of the playbill, on the opening of the present theatre, on the 30th of May, 1766; among the respective names, not one is at present living. "The Conscious Lovers," and the farce of the Citizen, are advertised, under the sanction of a concert of music, as the house was not until some years afterwards, honoured with a patent. Walked in the interior of the Square I reside in until four, when I dined—looked again into the novel; drank

tea, took a short walk, supped between nine and ten, and ran through the novel, 3 volumes. I cannot much commend either the manner or matter of it; in some passages I found it exceptionable—I often reprove myself for looking into a first volume of these, too generally, idle productions, as curiosity, however bad they are, generally impels me to pursue them to the end.—In my humble opinion, a licenser is as necessary for a circulating library, as for dramatic productions intended for representation, especially when it is considered how young people, especially girls, often procure, and sometimes in a secret manner, books of so evil a tendency, that not only their time is most shamefully wasted, but their morals and manners tainted and warped for the remainder of their lives—I am firmly of opinion, that many females owe the loss of reputation to the insinuating, seductive, and pernicious publications, too often found in those dangerous seminaries."

"*Monday, Sept. 6th.*

"Arose at eight; spent some time in reading and writing memorandums—breakfasted, and dressed—walked out, and bought "Cary's Itinerary." At eleven, went to the

theatre, and rehearsed Sir Pertinax, afterwards walked, accompanied by Mr. Edwin, to the Bell Inn, and paid for a trunk carrying from Plymouth; sauntered in the interior of the Square; dined: towards evening crossed the water, and walked in the Church-yard of St. Mary, Redcliff; re-crossed the river, paying each time one half-penny; went to the theatre and played Sir Pertinax; the audience very numerous, and the play tolerably acted. It has never yet been acted at Bath, and this night was the first in Bristol. I shall take another opportunity of noticing it—returned home, supped, tumbled over some books, and went to bed about midnight."

"*Tuesday, Sept. 7th.*

"Arose a little before nine; breakfasted; read hastily two scenes of Bajazet; tried on a dress for that character: dressed, and wrote memorandums. Some time after eleven, set out for Bath, accompanied by a female friend, and Mr. Taylor, of the Bath theatre, who was engaged to sing that night at Sydney Gardens, where was a gala, and an exhibition of fire-works, after the ascension of Mons. Garnerin and agentleman in a balloon. Dlighted at the White Lion; afterwards walked to

the gardens, purchased four admission tickets, 5s. each, viewed for some time the process of filling the balloon; went to Mr. Walmsley's, and dined in company of Mr. Taylor and Mr. Bell, a painter. After dinner, the whole party went to the gardens, and between 5 and 6 in the evening, the balloon, with the two aerial passengers, made a very fine ascent, and about 7 descended, some say 13, others 16 miles from Bath.

At 7 the concert began; the company not near so numerous as was expected.—After the ascent, our party, except Mr. T. returned to Mr. W.'s and drank tea; then returned to the gardens, and preambulated them. At nine the fire-works were played off with great brilliancy and success—supped at the garden house, returned to Mr. W.'s, and, about one in the morning, left Bath, on our return to Bristol; sat in my apartment sometime, and went to bed early in the morning."

"*Wednesday, Sept. 8th.*

"Arose late, and sometime after eleven went to the theatre, and read Bajazet; looked over some pages; dined; walked out, went into a bookseller's shop and purchased "Broad Grins," by George Colman *the*

younger, price 5s. very dear indeed; went to the Coffee-room at the Bush, drank some brandy and water, read several newspapers, went home, afterwards to the theatre, where I played Bajazet so very imperfect, that I was obliged to cut out a part of the first scene in the 5th act—returned home, supped, and went to bed."

"*Thursday, Sept. 9th.*

"Arose late; breakfasted and dressed; read some part of "Broad Grins;" dined a little after one; Mr. Grist dined with us, who I took leave of, as he was to set out early next morning for Litchfield. Some time after two, Mr. Dimond called, and in company with him and Mr. Glassington, set out for Bath; went to Mr. Collins's in St. James's-street—drank some brandy and water, and looked over 3 Bath newspapers; went to the theatre, drank tea in my dressing-room, played Sir Pertinax to a full and genteel audience: the first time of the play being acted in Bath.—At half past nine, set out on my return to Bristol with Mr. and Mrs. Charlton; supped and went to bed, fatigued, some time after midnight."

" *Friday, Sept.* 10*th.*

" Arose about ten; breakfasted, and finished " Broad Grins," which was soon done—ludicrous verse in ludicrous measure. Employed some time in writing. In a careless desultory manner, looked into " Murray's 1st vol. of the History of the American War." The author, late a dissenting minister at Newcastle upon Tyne, seems to possess little merit as a historian. His language is coarse and inelegant, and he appears to have had few resources of information, but what he gleaned from pamphlets and periodical publications. " Miscellanies, in prose and verse, by Mrs. M. Deverell, Gloucestershire." These Miscellanies, both prose and verse, are chiefly in the epistolary style, and seem designed for the narrow circle to which they are addressed. A volume of " Letters on Men, Measures, and Politics," avowedly selected from the papers of the day, (1794—95 and 96,) and, however interspersed with some truth and argument, abound with rancour and scurrility, teem with sedition, inflammable insinuations, and closely border upon treason, at least as our laws interpret treason. First vol. of " Miscella-

nies, Moral, Political, Medical, &c. by Hercules Crammond, M. D." A strange, incoherent farrago of private affairs, intermixed with accounts by no means new, of the shocking atrocities lately committed in France, during the first stages of the revolution. The writer seems a flighty, indigent, disappointed man.—Dined between two and three—looked into the 2d vol. of "Chambers's Cyclopædia;" in the evening played Sir Pertinax to another full house; after supper tumbled over some books, and went to bed after eleven."

"*Saturday, Sept. 11th.*

"Arose about half past nine; breakfasted; dressed; read in "Walker's Elements of Geography, and Natural and Civil History." Walked to St. James's fair, with Miss W. and a little girl: purchased a fairing for the latter; viewed some wax-work; returned home; read again in "Walker," and dined a little after one o'clock. Between two and three, set out for Bath, in company of Mr. Charlton; arrived there between four and five, went to the White Lion, and ordered a pair of horses for Teusday morning next: looked over some newspapers, went to the theatre,

drank tea, and played for the second and last time, Sir Pertinax. Four times this week I have played that character, and three nights successively.

" The comedy of the " Man of the World," as I was informed by Mr. Austin, of Chester, was produced in Dublin so long since as the year 1759, or 60, in which Mr. A. played Lord Lumbercourt. It then bore the title of the " True-born Scotchman." At what period it was licensed and produced at London under its present name, I know not, as I have not read Mr. Macklin's life. It at that time underwent various alterations. The fable is simple and well conducted; the characters, though highly coloured, naturally drawn, and the language nervous and correct. So fastidious was the author in imitation of ancient comedy, that he has not allowed a single change of scene in the whole play. A library from beginning to end: the same scene through his " Love-a-la-Mode." He seems to entertain a strong prejudice against the Scotch in general; yet he appears to make some atonement by portraying the Knight's family as very different in sentiment from himself. The Scotch are certainly very national, but whether more

than the English, Welsh, or Irish, I will not presume to say. They frequently carry their point, whether of good or evil tendency, by a steady perseverance in adapting their behaviour to the exigence of the moment. When this comedy was printed by subscription, (together with his farce,) there were again some alterations introduced, but not being in the licensed manuscript, they are not usually spoken. One speech of Egerton's in particular, is a just and glowing picture of the atrocious and flagitious enormities, too often practised at elections, by all ranks of people. The province of comedy is to expose and censure, as well as to ridicule. It cannot show mankind as they are, without exhibiting their vices and deformities. The easiest method of appreciating the just merits of this comedy, is to compare it with those of the present time. Returned to Bristol about midnight; supped, and went to bed some time after one."

"*Sunday, Sept.* 12*th.*

"Arose between ten and eleven; dressed, breakfasted, employed some time in writing. Read some passages of "Chrysal, or the Adventures of a Guinea." About one, walked

to the Hot-wells. Opposite the pump-room, in a corner, a part of the rock projects, on which the building is founded—ascend by a few stone steps, and a winding rugged road to the village of Clifton—at the top stands the upper pump-room—at a short distance, the summit of St. Vincent's rocks, said to be 300 feet from the bed of the river—here stand the remains of a windmill, which appears in the inside to have suffered from fire—there are also, vestiges of a Roman Camp. It was low water, but when the tide answers, it must be a pleasant and surprising sight to see large vessels sailing so far beneath the level whereon the spectator stands—there are many handsome hotels and houses, but there are several unfinished buildings, which having stood some years in that situation, are now become piles of ruins, and yield a view gloomy and desolate—walked in the church yard; returned home and dined at four—read again in "Chrysal" and the last Bath paper; went to the Bath Coffee-room, and read part of several London papers, and the Anti-Jacobin Review for last July—returned home, read again in "Chrysal," and went to bed about eleven."

"*Monday, Sept.* 13*th.*

"Arose a litte after ten; a Mr. Shaw called upon me; spent some time in writing; went, accompanied by Mr. Cunningham, to the Talbot inn; paid my bill there, and ordered horses early in the morning of next day; sat a short time with Mr. C. in the coffee-room; called in at the theatre; saw Mr. Bennet, who had arrived from Birmingham, to join the company; returned home; paid my lodgings; took a walk, and bought a volume, called "Eccentric Biography;" read some of the extracts; dined between two and three; in the evening played Richard to a numerous audience—the veteran Corsican general Paoli, present. After the play, settled with the treasurer of the theatre, returned home and supped."

"*Tuesday Sept.* 14*th.*

"Sat from supper time, the preceding evening, with Mr. Taylor, and Mr. Walter Smith, until two in the morning, when my chaise came to the door—about half past two, left Bristol, changed horses at the White Lion, Bath, then at the White Hart, Chippenham,

and between nine and ten arrived at the Marlbro' arms, Marlbro,' where we breakfasted—bought three North Wiltshire cheeses, looked over a newspaper, and proceeded to Speenhill, from thence to Reading, where we dined; looked over a newspaper, and about seven arrived at the Crown, Slough—on the journey, read some extracts from the "Eccentric." Supped, looked over a newspaper, and went to bed before ten."

Wednesday, Sept. 15th.

"Called up by the ostler before four, and about half past, sat out for Hounslow, from thence to London, and arrived at the York Hotel in Albemarle street, about a quarter before eight—breakfasted, dressed, went to the theatre and ran over a part of Richard. On my return to the hotel, met several acquaintance; at three, dined. Took a coach, stopped at No. 34, Leicester-square, drank a glass of brandy and water, went to the theatre, dressed and played Richard for the thirty-sixth time in London—was well received by a crowded audience—after the play Mr. Cherry, late of the Dublin and Bath theatres, sat some time in my dressing room, and accompanied me in a coach as far as Al-

bemarle street—supped, looked over the Sun paper, and went to bed before one."

"*Thursday, Sept.* 16*th.*

"Arose a little after nine, breakfasted, and read the Morning Post—stepped into the shop of Messrs. Carpenter's, booksellers, in Bond street; went to the theatre; walked with Mr. Murray, called at my butcher and wine merchant's, and paid their respective bills—dined at the hotel at four o'clock—in the evening called at Harold's tavern; supped at the hotel, read a newspaper, and went to bed about midnight."

"*Friday, Sept.* 17*th.*

"Arose between nine and ten, breakfasted, read a newspaper, walked out, returned home and read a tragedy, or, as Mr. William Mountfort, the author, entitles it, an Historical play, called "King Edward third, with the fall of Mortimer, Earl of March," printed in 1719; also a piece in three acts, "The life and death of Dr. Faustus, with the humours of Harlequin and Scaramouch; interspersed with songs and dances," by the same author, printed in 1720. Dined at four; in the evening called in at the theatre and

Harold's. Supped at the hotel, and went to bed about midnight."

"*Saturday, Sept.* 18*th.*

"Arose between nine and ten, breakfasted, looked over a newspaper, went to the theatre and received the first payment of my new salary. I should have mentioned having signed a new article for three years, exclusive of this season. Walked about; dined at the hotel at four; paid my bill, servants, &c. called at my wine merchant's, went and saw the entertainments at Astley's amphitheatre. The pantomimic exhibition of a French company formed a part of them, but rather tired than amused me; towards the conclusion took a coach to my lodgings, Bury street, St. James's, No. 28. Supped and went to bed."

"*Sunday, Sept.* 19*th.*

"Arose late and continued at home all day, much indisposed; endeavoured to amuse myself with reading a part of the 1st vol. of "Robinson Crusoe." Dined about four. In the evening Mr. Ledger called with Mr. Harris's compliments, and desiring me to prepare for Hamlet on Monday the 27th, also a call for rehearsal the next morning; supped

and went to bed early. During the day read "The Observer."

"Monday, Sept. 20th.

"After breakfasting and dressing, walked to the theatre, from thence to the Hamburgh coffee-house, near the Royal Exchange, where I took up a bill that was due. Returned to the theatre, and ran over in a very slovenly manner, some scenes of Sir John Falstaff. Went home, employed some time in writing; dined at four, walked out and called at the theatre; returned home, read in "Robinson Crusoe" and "The Star" newspaper; supped, and went to bed between the hours of eleven and twelve. Since I came to town received two letters of invitation to play for benefits at Brighton, and the same number on the like occasion, from Richmond; one of the former proposed to share the house with me, after the expenses, and one of the latter to pay me ten pounds—declined complying with them all. Mr. Lewis has I find relinquished the part of the Prince of Wales, in Henry 4th, and the character is to be personated by Mr. Brunton."

"*Tuesday Sept. 21st.*

"Arose about six; until breakfast employed the time in writing—went to a ten o'clock rehearsal at the theatre, of Sir John Falstaff; the rehearsal by no means regular; returned home, took a walk, and employed the interval, till dinner-time, in reading—about five, walked to the south side of Grosvenor-square, where I took my stand to see Mons. Garnerin re-ascend, from St. George's parade, with a balloon and a parachute attached to it, by which he was to descend; a little before six, he arose in a grand and pleasing manner, and when at a great height, cut the fastening by which the parachute was attached to the balloon, and in a few minutes alighted in safety in a field near the small-pox hospital, St. Pancras. The basket in which he descended, was very much agitated as it came near the earth, and gave serious apprehensions for his safety. This is the first successful enterprise of the kind in this kingdom—returned home to tea, read, supped, and then read over Falstaff—went to bed about eleven."

"*Wednesday, Sept. 22d.*

"Arose about nine, breakfasted, looked over

the Morning Post; the chief news an account of M. Garnerin's aerial expedition. Wrote memorandums—went to the wardrobe of the theatre and tried on some clothes—dined about half past two; read over, (and made some marginal insertions,) the part of Falstaff.—The evening was warm and the house crowded, particularly the pit and galleries. I never suffered more uneasiness on the stage. My two last acts, I am certain, must have been very bad; I was scarcely able to stand—took a coach home; supped, and went speedily to bed—I shall defer saying any thing of the play until some future occasion."

"*Thursday, Sept.* 23*d.*

"Arose some time after nine, hoarse and much relaxed. After breakfast looked over the Morning Herald, and read part of Mr. Rowe's account of the life and particulars of Shakspeare—read over and marked the first act and part of the second, of the character of Hamlet—walked out, met Mr. Cherry, walked through the park to Mr. Raymond's, near Grosvenor place; met Mr. Pope there; returned home to dinner between four and five. About six went to Spencer's to inquire for Mr. T. Collins; looked over "The Travel-

ler;" returned home; on my way purchased a set of Shakspeare, of the same edition I had looked at in the morning—the text from Stevens's last edition, and the notes by various persons—supped about nine; looked over the Courier, and went to bed between eleven and twelve."

"*Friday, Sept. 24th.*

"Arose at six—employed till breakfast time in reading and marking the part of Hamlet—at eleven went to rehearsal—on my return finished marking the part—read the Morning Herald—after dinner took a walk, went to Spencer's tavern; looked over newspapers, and remained there until the play was over at Covent Garden—returned home in a coach with Miss W. and her mother; supped and went to bed."

"*Saturday, Sept. 25th.*

"Arose a little before ten, dressed, breakfasted, and looked over the Morning Herald; at eleven went to the theatre and rehearsed Hamlet; returned home by the park. Employed some time about Hamlet. Dispached a note, containing an admission for two on Monday evening to Covent Garden theatre.

to Mr. I. R. late of York. Dined at four—in the evening went to the pit of Drury Lane theatre, to see Mr. Cherry make his first appearance in London, in the part of Sir Benjamin Dove, in Mr. Cumberland's comedy of "The Brothers;" he was warmly received and applauded, and played remarkably well. He afterwards acted Lazarillo, in the farce of "Two Strings to your Bow," and experienced a continuance of approbation. "The Brothers" is, I believe, Mr. C.'s first production, but I think not his best—Miss Pope was excellent in Lady Dove. The farce is a mere trifle, which can only be kept alive by the acting of Lazarillo.

"I saw some acquaintance in the house; in the pit Mrs. *One* and her daughter, late of Manchester. At the conclusion of the evening's entertainment, I set them down at their lodgings in Swallow-street, with a lady who lives in the same house, and, after promising to breakfast with them next morning, returned home, supped, read some of "Sterne's Letters," and went to bed some time after midnight."

"*Sunday, Sept. 26th.*

"Arose at nine, dressed, went and breakfasted with the party I had promised the evening before. At noon took leave, walked in Hyde-park, the Green-park, and St. James' park. Returned home; read Bell's Weekly Messenger; employed some time in writing. Dined at four—took an evening walk: read some more of Sterne's Letters. His story of the Watchcoat I believe I shall not read again; his Letters I shall glance at—I have read his Tristram and some of his sermons, and will write more of him. Spent some time with Hamlet, went to bed a quarter before nine; drank some gruel afterward."

"*Monday Sept. 27th.*

"Arose after a restless night, about a quarter after seven—looked into Hamlet; read the Morning Post, and breakfasted before nine—walked out and paid several tradesmen's bills—took a slight and very early dinner—spent some time with Hamlet. In the evening went to the theatre and played Hamlet (first time in London,) to the most brilliant and numerous audience of this season. I shall not make any further mention of this play, until after it is next performed; ex-

cept that Miss Reeve, daughter of a composer of that name, made her first appearance on any stage in Ophelia, and was very favourably received. She afterwards played Mary in the farce of the Turnpike Gate—Returned home and supped; Miss W— of the party."

"*Tuesday, Sept. 28th.*

"Arose some time after nine; read a newspaper, breakfasted, and took a long and circuitous walk—called at several places, and looked over three newspapers. Bought "The Picture of London." Returned home, and dined at four, Miss W— with us—looked into "The Picture, &c."—supped, and went early to bed."

"*Wednesday, Sept. 29th.*

"Arose some time after nine, and immediately repaired to the theatre; ran over some scenes of "The Man of the World"—Rehearsed Shylock in a very irregular manner, and afterwards Sir Archy in the saloon, still more irregular—went to Johnson's oyster shop in Bow street—walked with Mr. Incledon to Leicester square, where being joined by Mr. I. and his two sons, we proceeded to Piccadilly, took a coach at an oil-shop, and

drove to his house at Brompton—we stopped by the way to speak to Mr. Cherry, and I promised to dine with him, at the house of an acquaintance, on Sunday next—after dining and drinking tea at Mr. I.'s, in company with him, Mrs. I. and Charles, went in a coach (from Knighton bridge,) to the theatre, and saw nearly four acts of "The Beaux Stratagem," and the musical after-piece of "The Escapes"—Miss Marriott made her second appearance before a London audience in Mrs. Sullen, and was well received. I think the play, however reprehensible in a moral view, one of the best acting comedies in the English language—Mr. Lewis was lively and spirited in Archer, and Mr. Johnstone humorous and entertaining in Foigard—I question if Irish characters were ever so well represented as by this comedian, who has the advantage of being a singer of considerable merit—the music of "The Escapes" is very pleasing, nor is the piece destitute of merit, but the conclusion is badly brought about. Accompanied by Mr. I. &c. as far as Duke street; supped and went to bed some time after midnight."

"*Thursday, Sept.* 30*th.*

"Arose at half past six; looked over some newspapers, adjusted some accounts; breakfasted, and employed a part of the morning in writing—received a letter from Mr. Sullivan, at present Usher at an academy in High-gate."

"*Cætera desunt.*"

CHAP. XIII.

Some remarks on the journal of September, 1802. *Mr. Cooke's failure in the character of Hamlet—remarks on the causes—he plays Cato—attempt at a journal in February.* 1803—*John Bull, or an Englishman's Fireside—Mr. Cooke plays Peregrine—morality of John Bull—German dramatists—Mr. Cooper—arrives from America and plays Hamlet, Macbeth, and Richard, at Drury Lane—Mr. Cooke's third benefit in London—becomes acquainted with Mr. Cooper—supper party—Godwin—visit to Mr. Harris—to Holcroft—cannot play Sir Archy M'Sarcasm.*

THE preceding diary suggests some observations to me, from my intimate knowledge of

the man, which might escape a reader who is unacquainted, or but partially acquainted with his character. And first his reading. Day after day. "The New Bristol Guide," diversified by a portion of some miscellany, a novel, or the "Army List." Secondly, his habit of solitary sauntering without any apparent motive, from place to place, and the isolated situation he held in society, scarcely ever visited by any one but from curiosity; no person appears to be the confidant of his schemes, or the partner of his labours, his journeys or his pleasure, except by accident. Though it is to be remarked that this journal gives no account of his hours of dissipation. Of study, in these 30 days, we see very little; although Hamlet, a part of the first consequence, is, during this period, represented by him, and he had in this part to cope with his rival on his "vantage ground." I will next remark the effect which coming to Bristol and Bath had on his conduct, by stimulating him to keep up the good name he had acquired at those places. He could not have kept so regular a diary at Manchester, or any place where he had *old cronies* to meet, and no reputation to lose; but at Bath and Bristol, he was comparatively a stranger.

He begins by early rising; he records his early rising; and he rises early that he may record it. He feels well, and enjoys the effect of his new regulation. His night-rides from Bath to Bristol, first break in upon his good regulations, and we find, that, after the expedition of the 7th, he does not get to bed until the morning of the 8th; he goes to rehearsal at noon, then drinks brandy and water, and at night cannot play. However, the next day, he goes to Bath, (under the charge, as I take it, of the prompter of Covent Garden,) and the desire of showing himself to advantage in Sir Pertinax the first time of playing it, and "tea in his dressing room," restores him.

We find him, after playing for the last night of his engagement, sitting up all night, and driving off for London in the morning—he *rests* the next night on the road, and arrives in London the fifteenth in the afternoon, brandy and water keeps up a due quantity of stimulus; and he plays, for the first time in the the third season, with *eclat*. Regularity succeeds, until after the unfortunate night on which he played Hamlet; then his journal quickly ceases, and, I fear, his regularity with it.

His failure in Hamlet affected him sensi-

bly, as is very evident from the following passage in another of his manuscripts, "On Monday the 27th I acted Hamlet to a very numerous audience. Next day the newspapers, some of whom, I believe, were *prepared* for the business, attacked me in a manner that would have been deemed impossible to have happened to any one, who had ever received the slightest approbation from an audience—a London one, I mean. I repeated it once, but never since,"—this was written five years after, in 1807. "I do not doubt but I had faults in abundance, but had I acted it as well as I had seen it acted by Garrick; my reception, *in that character*, would have been much the same. I believe the second night was worse than the first, and the cause is too obvious to mention."

It will be recollected, that Mr. Kemble was at this time absent from England, and that Mr. Kemble was, in the opinion of the greater part of the public, the only possible representative of Hamlet. Nay, Hamlet was looked upon as Mr. Kemble's property; and it would be felt, if not thought dishonest, to seize it in his absence. It was like taking possession of a man's house, while he was making a journey. Under these circumstan-

ces, I think it was an ill-judged attempt of Mr. Harris, and must have failed, even if Mr. Cooke had been much better qualified by nature and habit for the part, than he was. That Mr. Cooke was not at this time qualified to contend for the character of Hamlet, I am assured, though I may be wrong to ascribe the cause to any natural deficiency. Had Cooke become the favourite of the London audience in 1780, instead of 1800—at the age of 25, instead of 45—had he been free from the habits which twenty years of low society had "buckled upon him;" we might have seen in him a Hamlet, though essentially different, not inferior to Kemble's, or to Garrick's.

On the twenty third of December, 1802, Mr. Cooke played Cato for the first time in London. He is said to have displayed talents in the representation of the virtuous Roman patriot, so opposite to those which had gained him his fame, that surprise was mingled with the delight of the audience. The soliloquy on Suicide was pronounced "one of the most exquisite *morceaus*, in point of judgment, thought, solemnity, and strictly characteristic expression," which a writer, who witnessed the exhibition, had remembrance

of. As I never saw Mr. Cooke play the part, and have no very high opinion of this poem of Mr. Addison's as a drama, I shall not dwell upon the subject.

We have seen how abruptly his thirty days journal in September, 1802, ended with "Cætera desunt." On the 5th of February, 1803, he appears to have summoned up resolution to begin again, and to keep "regular accounts." This good resolution he held fast to for—one day and a half. The result is as follows.

Piccadilly West, No. 9, Saturday, February the 5th, 1803.

"Arose between eight and nine—after breakfasting, and putting some things in order, went to the theatre and rehearsed Pierre. The rehearsal on my part, not very regular, as I was obliged to read several of the speeches—after visiting the wardrobe, and my butcher's, at Charing-Cross, returned home; dressed and dined at four. Read the Morning Post of the day, (which as I regularly take it in every morning, I need not again observe, unless to make memorandums from it.) Citizen Sebastiani's report, addressed to the Chief Consul, of his tour in Egypt, I think plainly proves, the French mean to pay an-

other visit to that part of the world. At half past five, went to pay a visit, by appointment, to Mrs. Hunn; who lives at No. 11, Trifton-street, Westminster. Met Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, the latter Mrs. H.'s eldest daughter, by the late Mr. Reddish, of Drury Lane theatre—Drank tea; supped, and spent a pleasant evening. About half past twelve, took a coach from Old Palace-Yard to the top of St. James's street, and then walked home; sat until two, and went to bed. This day began to keep my accounts regularly."

"*Sunday, February the 6th.*

"Arose at ten—after breakfast, read over memorandums of the month of last September; and employed some time in writing, adjusting accounts, &c."

"Early in March," says Mr. Cooke, "George Colman *the younger's* excellent comedy of "John Bull" made its appearance, and was greatly received. I acted Peregrine."

It was on Saturday, the fifth of March, 1803, that this play was produced at Covent Garden theatre. As I think it Mr. Colman's best play, and as a part of the subject gives a fair opening for examining public opinion on

a point of morality connected with the censure thrown on a large portion of dramatic writing, I will recall the plot to the reader's memory.

Peregrine, who has been long absent from England, gains footing on the coast of Cornwall by swimming from the ship in which he was passenger, when he supposed her in danger of foundering. He arrives at the sign of the Red Cow, learns that he is near Penzance, and that his old friend *Job Thornberry* is still living there. A cry of distress is heard; he rushes out and returns with *Mary Thornberry*, whom he has rescued from violence. He learns from her that she had just fled from her father's house, having been forsaken by her seducer, *Frank Rochdale*, who is engaged to marry *Lady Caroline Braymore*, who, with her father, *Lord Fitz Balaam*, has arrived at the manor house of *Sir Simon Rochdale*. Peregrine persuades Mary to remain at *the Red Cow* until his return from Penzance, and immediately goes to *Job Thornberry*, whose effects are at the moment in the power of bailiffs, (under a commission of bankruptcy.) The traveller makes himself known to the Brazier, as one who had been, when a boy, relieved by his benevolence, and recommended

to a ship captain. He tells him that he has returned home rich; and producing a box, asserts that it contains the profits of the ten pounds he had received in his distress, and that it is the Brazier's property. Job refuses the offer, observing, that his child having deserted him, he has no one left to care for. *Peregrine* is convinced that it was Job's daughter he had rescued, and promises him that if he will accept his assistance, and consider it as a debt, he will bring him to his daughter. This is agreed to, and the Brazier's debts paid. Job is conducted to his daughter, who is forgiven, and accompanied by her father to the house of *Sir Simon*. Job in vain demands redress for his daughter, but is supported in his claim by Peregrine. In the meantime, Lady Caroline having learned from *Shuffleton* that *Frank Rochdale* is attached to another, consents to marry *Shuffleton*, and informs *Sir Simon* of that event.—Still the Baronet obstinately refuses redress to the Brazier, when *Peregrine* declares himself to be the elder brother of *Sir Simon*, and heir to the estate he had so long possessed. The proofs of this assertion being undeniable, *Sir Simon* consents to the union of *Mary*, with her seducer.

In the character of Job Thornberry, Mr. Colman has portrayed John Bull, or the Englishman, and with the pencil of a master. He shows him at the moment, when his fireside had been violated by a false friend, who had seduced his only child, his darling Mary. He shows him firm in his demands for justice, and rough in the mode of demanding it; but tender and forgiving to his betrayed daughter. He shows him honest, benevolent, brave, and merciful.

Dennis Brulgruddery, is the representative of Ireland. In him, "eccentricity is blended with kindness." He is filled with whim, humour, and good-nature. He is master of the Red Cow Inn, and of *Mistress Brulgruddery*; and his stock in trade is a brandy bottle, which is empty, and a barrel of beer, which is sour. He had been educated to the church, for he was pew-opener at Belfast, but lost his place for sleeping in sermon-time; the parson having accused him of snoring so loud, that he awoke the rest of the congregation. *Dennis* has a cornish clown, *Dan*, for head waiter and ostler; but there are neither guests nor horses.

Tom Shuffleton, and *Lady Caroline*, are satires on fashionable folly, and strictly necessa-

ry to the conduct of the plot. *Sir Simon* is a common character, but serves as a contrast to *Job* and *Peregrine*, and is concerned in the main business of the fable. *Peregrine* is the champion of distressed weakness, the assertor of justice, and the bold opponent of folly, vice, and guilt.

The play is a monument of genius, left rather unfinished, a bold illustration of national character, and a noble lesson of high morality. As such it was, and continues to be, received by the public of England and America. Its great object is to excite a just detestation of the character of a seducer, and to inculcate mercy and forgiveness to the seduced.

This is justly the praise of Mr. Colman; yet how have other authors been vilified, for inculcating the same moral and christian precepts! What torrents of abuse have been turned upon Kotzebue, for uniting *Agatha Fribourg*, in wedlock to her seducer, after twenty years of exemplary conduct, and exemplary suffering! The reprehension of the crime, and the exhibition of the consequences, are stronger in Kotzebue, than in Colman. But German literature had become at one period, too brilliant, too fashionable, and usurped too much attention; it became

the interest of certain English writers to put it down; the English translators succeeded in darkening its brightness by a most thick, and sometimes impenetrable, fogginess; and their opponents found it no difficult matter to extinguish the light, or at least to persuade the public that it did not shine. As my admiration of the German dramatists was not founded on the praises of English writers, so my opinion has not been shaken by their censures. And as I never appreciated these Saxon bards so highly as the old English play writers, I feel no inducement to join with the hue-and-cry raised against them, and to depreciate them to a level with the modern drama manufacturers of London.

In the performance of Peregrine, Mr. Cooke supported the manly and generous character, which the author had depicted, by his characteristic vigour and strict attention to nature. But "John Bull" could not add to Mr. Cooke's fame, though it did essentially to that of Mr. Colman.

It was during this season, that Mr. Cooper made his second trial of the London boards. This gentleman made his first appearance in London, in the year 1795, at Covent Garden theatre, and attracted great attention in Ham-

let, and Macbeth, though then a very young man. In Lothario, a character which he has since played with exquisite skill, he failed, and soon after retired into Wales; from whence he was attracted by the offers of Mr. Wignel; and, having made an engagement for the Philadelphia theatre, he embarked for America with Mr. and Mrs. Merry, Mr. Warren, and Mr. Wignel. Of Mr. Cooper's fortunes in the western hemisphere, it is not my intention to speak here. At the time it was known in this country, that Mr. Kemble had gone to the continent of Europe, Mr. Cooper was invited by Mr Erskine, son of lord Erskine, to go to Drury-Lane, and having obtained the consent of the manager of the New-York theatre, he re-crossed the Atlantic, and made his second appearance in London, at Drury-Lane theatre, in the character of Hamlet. Mr. Cooper was much better qualified to succeed in this character, at this time, than Mr. Cooke; but it is not improbable, that some of the observations in the beginning of this chapter, are applicable to Mr. Cooper's, as well as Mr. Cooke's attempt. He, after Hamlet, played *Macbeth* and *Richard;* and the result was the offer of an engagement for the next season, on terms which were not accepted,

and as remuneration for the present, a night in June for his benefit, he paying the charges; at a time when the Hay-market theatre would be open, as well as the winter theatres, and the town comparatively empty.

On the twentieth of April, Mr. Cooke had his third benefit in London. Its being fixed so early, is a proof of the value set upon him still by Mr. Harris; but I have no reason to suppose, that this was like the preceding two, a free benefit. All he says in his chronicle, is, "This year I took the Man of the World for my own night."

Mr. Cooke's irregularities had now affected his popularity; and his night this year, though he played his, generally esteemed, most finished character, Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant, was poorly attended.

Soon after this benefit, Mr. Cooke became acquainted with Mr. Cooper; a circumstance of no little consequence in his future history.

All who have heard any thing of the early history of Mr Cooper, know that his education was superintended by the friendly, and almost paternal, care of the benevolent philosopher, Mr. William Godwin, who, though the reverse of T. Holcroft in disposition and manner, the first being all mildness,

the second all fire, was his confidential friend, and daily companion. Mr. Cooper, on his return to England, renewed his intercourse with these his first friends and instructors, and in matters of consequence, was guided by their advice.

About this time, Mr. Holcroft having expressed a desire to become acquainted with a man of Mr. Cooke's notoriety and celebrity in the theatrical world, Mr. Cooper requested Mr. Dwyer, then the principal gentleman comedian of Drury-Lane theatre, to introduce him to Mr. Cooke. This was accordingly done, sometime in May, 1803, and Cooke and Dwyer accepted Cooper's invitation to dine with him at the Wrekin, in Broad Court, between the two theatres: neutral ground. Dwyer having a part to play that evening, left them; and by the aid of the bottle, that potent conciliator, which opens the heart and the mouth, in proportion as it shuts up the avenues to the understanding, our two heroes became warm and confidential friends. Cooke inquired into Cooper's situation at Drury-Lane, and finding that the only remuneration offered him for the services he had performed, was an engagement to commence the next season, which was declined, and a

benefit to take place the 10th June, which, as Mr. Cooper was a stranger, he did not think worth accepting, Mr. Cooke offered to play for him, provided Mr. Harris's consent could be obtained for Cooke to perform at Drury-Lane theatre. Cooper with thanks declined; but being pressed by his warm, though new friend, promised to consult his other friends, and after a convivial evening they parted.

Mr. Cooper having consulted his friends, particularly Messrs. Godwin and Holcroft, and they advising him to accept Cooke's offer of playing for him, he did so, and waiting upon Cooke, invited him to sup with him at his lodgings. The invitation was readily accepted, and the party was made up of Messrs. Godwin, Marshal, Cooke, and Cooper, some accident preventing Holcroft from attending. Godwin and Cooke, unknown to each other, except by the voice of Fame, mutually wished for an interview. They now met for the first time, and surely a worse assorted pair seldom met. Cooke was, however, unusually amusing, and Godwin was interested and pleased by him, during the early part of the evening; but in proportion as the rosy god inspired his votary, he became less interesting to the philosophic skeptic, whose apathy be-

ing seconded by the power of his domestic habit of early yielding himself to sleep, he fairly sunk under Cooke's oracular eloquence, and gave himself a prey to "dull forgetfulness." Cooper by this time indulging himself in our country custom, "a custom more honour'd in the breach than the observance," was smoking a segar, Marshal taking his hot brandy and water, Godwin sleeping, and Cooke drinking wine and talking incessantly to the philosopher, till he discovered that he was talking to one who could not hear; then, after a pause, and looking earnestly at the placid expression of the sleeper's benign countenance, he broke out into the following apostrophe.

"Asleep!—fast asleep! How perfectly quiet he rests—and yet he is a democrat! There is a smile upon his countenance that looks "peace and good will to man," and yet he has thrown the torch of Discord abroad, and set half mankind in flame! What a beautiful head; how mild the expression, as if he had been nourished alone by the "milk of human kindness!"—What a head! as the Fox said in the sculptor's shop—yet I can't say this head wants for brains."

"What a noble head—and yet pregnant with such monstrous error! Errors that if receiv-

ed would destroy the bonds between subject and sovereign, between parent and child, husband and wife; give a loose and free sway to selfishness and sensuality; involve the world in anarchy, and steep it in blood. Such philosophers—O how I detest them! I could wish government to exert its force for their extermination—by death—by torture"—then looking at Godwin's face, "but not him—not this—O no, no! his conscience is good, or he could not sleep thus, and look thus."

It was in the course of the evening fixed, that Cooper should accept the 10th of June for his benefit night; that Othello should be the play, and that Cooke should play Iago to Cooper's Othello; all with the proviso that Mr. Harris would consent to Cooke's playing one night at Drury-Lane house. Mr. Godwin went home; Cooke staid till 6 o'clock in the morning, in the interval having appointed Cooper to breakfast with him at 10, and then go down to Mr. Harris's country seat, 15 miles from London, at Uxbridge, to obtain the desired consent. At 6 he was carried home in a coach.

At the appointed hour, Cooper with a post-chaise called on Cooke, and found him in bed, and as wild as when he left him. As the post

chaise was ready, Cooper, after a time, persuaded him to get up and prepare to take an airing. Breakfast was ordered; Cooke having dressed and taken a few dishes of *laced* tea, was all alive again. As they drove through the park, Cooke asked the time. "One." "One! Why we have time enough; I only play Sir Archy to night; I don't go on till the after-piece, and am not wanted until 9; there's time enough to go down to Harris's; only fifteen miles." Cooper gladly accepted the proposal, for independent of the consideration of the Benefit, he was extremely anxious that Cooke should be so employed through the day as to overcome the effects of the last night's excess, and have no opportuntiy of iterating the cause by way of remedy against its unpleasant effects. Accordingly about 2 they turned into the Uxbridge road, and in about two hours reached an Inn, near the country seat of the Great Man.

It was settled that while the horses were changing, Cooke should walk to Mr. Harris's, and that Cooper, who did not wish to be seen in the business, should drive to the common, near the manager's house, and wait for him. Cooke accordingly went; Cooper con-

gratulating himself that the veteran would have no opportunity of renewing his excess, and might be carried to town, recovered, and in prime order for playing, took some refreshment; and after allowing what he thought a reasonable time for settling the business, got into a post-chaise and drove to the Common. No sign of Cooke. He drives round the Common. A quarter—a half, three quarters of an hour pass, and no Cooke. Impatient and alarmed at the delay, the postilion is ordered to drive to Mr. Harris's. The chaise arrives at the door, the bell is rung, and the porter appears.

"Is Mr. Cooke here?"

"Yes, Sir."

"I want to see him."

"Your name, Sir?"

"Say a gentleman in a post chaise wants to see Mr. Cooke."

The porter rings and a valet appears, receives the message, and carrying it to Cooke, returns with,

"Mr. Cooke's compliments, and requests Mr. Cooper to walk up stairs into the library."

"Is Mr. Harris with him?"

"No, Sir."

"Is any body with him?"

"No, Sir—he is alone—Mr. Harris has a party to dine."

"Has Mr. Harris seen Mr. Cooke?"

"No, Sir—Mr. Harris was walking with company in the grounds, when Mr. Cooke arrived, and desired that he might be shown into the library, ordering a dinner and a bottle of wine to be sent to Mr. Cooke with his compliments, and he would wait upon Mr. Cooke when he had himself dined."

"Has Mr. Cooke dined?"

"No, Sir—he is finishing his dinner, and invites you to come and partake with him."

Cooper's aversion to entering the house in this manner was great—but the image of Cooke, with a bottle of wine before him, and the well known consequences—and his own responsibility, overcame his reluctance; and alighting, he marched up stairs, into Mr. Harris's library. There sat the veteran, his bottle nearly empty, and as happy as though the manager had treated him with all the respect due to an equal, or superior.

"Come, my dear boy—sit down—excellent port—come, take a glass; you may as well take your dinner, since we must wait." So, telling Mr. Harris's engagements, and pro-

mise of seeing him after dinner, he pours out two glasses of wine, and empties the bottle.

The valet, attentive to his master's good name for hospitality, flies and brings in a second bottle, before Cooper has time to felicitate himself upon what he thought the end of the wine drinking.

In this dilemma, he saw no resource but to drink as much as possible of the second bottle, and to aid him in this undertaking he must eat. He accordingly sat down to the remains of an excellent dinner, and poured out the wine by the tumbler-full as table liquor; expecting Harris every minute, and wishing to avoid him, and leave Cooke without wine. Cooper was extremely industrious and soon reduced the bottle, then making a second appointment for the Common, desiring Cooke to join him as soon as he had seen Harris; the post-chaise is again ordered to drive to the place of assignation.

About 6 o'clock the merry tragedian made his appearance at the place of appointment, in high glee, and supported by a valet.

What pass'd with Mr. Harris in the absence of Mr. Cooper, was collected by him from Cooke's own account, and other sources.

Mr. Harris after dinner left his company,

and came to Cooke, whose second bottle was nearly empty—"Ah, Mr. Cooke, how d'ye do?—glad to see you—well!—Business, ha?—What is it?—left my company—what is it?—what is it? What's the business?"

Cooke. Sit down, and we'll take a glass of wine, (filling the glasses and emptying the bottle.) You look very well, Sir. Here's to your health! (drinks.)

Harris. Thank you—your health, Cooke—well—what is it? what is it?

Cooke. You are my best friend, and I have come to ask of you a particular favour.

Harris. Well, well, well, what is it? what is it?

Cooke. Money!—Money!—Money! (with his particular, and inimitable expression of countenance, and a peculiar sharp emphatic tone which his mimics easily succeed in copying.)

Harris. What?

Cooke. Money!

Harris. Why—why Cooke—what can you want of money, with your salary, and the benefits you have received?

Cooke. All gone! I never could bear to lock up a guinea; I have too much love for my royal master to put even his image in confinement.

"Who rules over freemen, should himself be free." In serious earnest, Sir, the end of the season is fast approaching with a long vacation, and it will find me without a shilling.

Harris. Well—but—vacation?—you make as much money as you please in the summer.

Cooke. But you know, Sir, I must have something to start with. I know what harpies managers are, (country managers,) I must not appear to want, and then I can make my bargain.

Harris. Well, well, well—that's true enough—must not be bare—well, well—how much—how much?

Cooke. Why, Sir, fifty pounds, will do to start with.

Harris. Well, well—(writes an order, and gives it to Cooke,) there—and now good bye—good bye—

Cooke. (Seizing and pressing Harris's hand between both his,) my best friend—thank ye—thank you—and now—

Harris. Company waits—good bye—good bye—

Cooke. You are the best friend I ever had in the world. I must drink your health before you go—(looking at the empty bottle,) one glass more.

Harris. (Rings and orders another bottle.)

Cooke. Your health, my best of friends.

Harris. Well—good bye—

Cooke. My good friend—one thing more before you go—

Harris. Well—well—well—quick then—

Cooke. Manchester. Ward and Bellamy. My good and fast friends in former days. Many's the slippery trick I have played them, and yet they never deserted me; and now that I am of some consequence, I would wish to show my gratitude—They want me to close their season—I'm not wanted here—Let me go down and play for them a few nights before Covent Garden closes.

Harris. Impossible, Cooke—bad example—give leave to you, all the rest ask it—then what becomes of the benefits—?

Cooke. I'm not wanted after the 10th of June—all the remaining benefits are made out without me—I'm not to play again.

Harris. You are sure of that.

Cooke. Quite sure, or I would not think of such a thing.

Harris. Well, well, go this time—good bye—

Cooke. My best of friends—your health—(Harris eagerly going, and glad to escape;

Cooke having drank, cries)—One thing more —(Harris stops)—Cooper.

Harris. Well, Sir, what is it?

Cooke. Cooper! Of Drury-Lane—He has been very ill used—and he's a good fellow.

Harris. What do you mean, Sir?

Cooke. Cooper—Holcroft's pupil; you know he play'd at our house some years ago; he play'd Hamlet in ninety-five—

Harris. Aye—aye—remember—well, well, what of him?

Cooke. Has his benefit at Drury-Lane 10th of June, and wants me to play for him.

Harris. No—no—no—no—

Cooke. A good fellow, Sir—and very ill used—

Harris. No, Cooke—Impossible—*You* play at Drury-Lane! quite out of the question—can't—won't!—No, no, no!

Cooke. The best creature in the world, Sir—I know him well, and love him much, Sir—and can't bear to see him trampled on by those damn'd rascals at Drury-Lane. Sheridan—to bring him from America, where he was every thing in his profession—bring him from his wife and family—promised him an engagement—here he has play'd part of the season, and the poor beggarly rogues won't

give him a farthing, but offer him a benefit—like all the *tricks* and *shuffling* of their *pack*, every actor ought to *cut* them.

Harris. Why, now you know, Cooke, that I would—but impossible—you know.

Cooke. Offer him a benefit in the middle of June!—poor dogs—*that* costs them nothing—a benefit!—he a stranger—no friends—lord Erskine's his friend, though—only think, Sir, of the meanness of the rogues—the unfeeling scoundrels—

Harris. Why—it is very bad treatment—but—

Cooke. Sir, I knew you, and I knew that you would feel indignant at such treatment; and in my confidence—my certainty of your generosity, I pledged myself—I am in honour bound to play for him.

Harris. Well—well—then you must.

Cooke. My dear—my best of friends—thank you—I must drink your health—thank you—thank you, my dearest friend—you have granted the three things I had most at heart—you have lifted a burthen—three burthens from me—Money! Manchester! Cooper!—I shall return to London light as Gossamer!—I will first finish my wine—(pouring the balance of the bottle into a tumbler,)

—and then—(displaying the wine, and raising his voice from the low level tone in which he had been speaking, to its high sharp key,) my voice will be as clear as your liquor!—Ahem!—I shall play in my best style to night, I promise you!

Harris. What! What's that? You play to night!

Cooke. I shall give it them in my best style! Aha! Ahem! Aha! Aha! Aha!—Haw!

Harris. Play to-night!—And here at this time! and in this situation!—John—Thomas! (ringing the bell violently,) Where's the carriage that brought Mr. Cooke?

Serv't. On the Common, Sir.

Cooke. Aha!—Common! That's right, I'm to join Cooper on the Common! But there's no hurry—let's have another bottle! Another bottle, my good friend!

Harris. No, no, no, no!—No more—go—go away—quick.—Here John!—lead Mr. Cooke.

Cooke. Stand away, fellow!—What do you mean, Sir—Is this treatment for a gentleman! A gentleman, and the son of a gentleman, to be treated thus by the son of a soap-boiler!—Pah! Fat!—Is this the way you

treat the man who has made your fortune ?—Fat !

Harris. Well—my dear Cooke—go—consider—the audience—the time o'day—your friends—

Cooke suffered himself to be soothed, and led away by the valet, leaving the astonished manager to anticipate the hisses and rioting of a disappointed public, and perhaps the discordant crashes of his lamps and chandeliers.

Having been helped into the post-chaise, the veteran, highly delighted with his success, exclaims, " My dear boy, I have done your business for you, all's settled !" and then in his way, tells what had past. The postilion, bribed to use the utmost speed of his horses, drives them furiously towards London. Cooke soon began to complain of spasms ; " his old complaint," &c and must stop for brandy, but by the address of his companion, the answer is uniformly at every public house, that they have nothing but beer. His spirits kept up till near London, and he frequently protested, that he would play better that night than ever he had done ; but when near the goal, he began to be fretful, and curse the theatre ; then resolving not to play that night, he gave way to drowsiness,

and his companion began to despair of his doing any thing on the stage, or even going to the house. Stimulated, however, by the knowledge that any failure would be attributed to him, he determined upon one effort more, and ordered the postilion to drive to Holcroft's; hoping that tea, and the conversation of a man whose writings he admired, but who was personally a stranger to him, and the desire to appear respectable in his eyes, would be a sufficient stimulus to arouse his benumbed faculties, and save the impending disgrace. Cooke's consent was obtained to going, and becoming acquainted with Holcroft this evening, on the assurance that the dramatist was very desirous of seeing him. They arrived, and found Mr. Holcroft and his daughter at tea.

Holcroft received them very cordially, and, after the usual formalities, to Cooper's infinite mortification, instead of suffering Cooke to drink tea, ordered wine. Cooper took an opportunity, while Cooke was in conversation with Miss Holcroft, to tell her father what they had been doing, what Cooke's situation then was, and the necessity of his playing that evening. Holcroft seeing Cooper's great anxiety, promised to second his intentions. Cooke

now thoroughly aroused, entered spiritedly into conversation, and being a sincere admirer of Holcroft's dramatic writings, made them his subject, and eulogized the author unsparingly; who in his turn praised Mr. Cooke's great histrionic talents, and the author and the actor, forgetting Cooper, and all concerns of the present moment, went on with unceasing eloquence in each other's praise, to the great annoyance of at least one of the auditors. Cooper seeing Cooke swallowing glass after glass, and perceiving no end to the conversation, now applied to Miss Holcroft to remind her father of Cooke's situation and engagements. A pretence of household concerns gave the opportunity, and Holcroft, in compliance, pretending an engagement, and saying, "I should be more chagrin'd, but that I see by the bills you are to play Sir Archy to night, and the time has come for you to go to the house," the party broke up. Cooper, who had sent for a Hack, got him into it, and driving with speed to Covent Garden theatre, fairly delivered him into the hands of the dressers, but not before the managers, prompter, and all the company, were in consternation at his absence, and the audience impatiently waiting and expressing as

usual their disapprobation. He played the first act tolerably, but the second was stopped by hisses, and the curtain dropped amidst groans, and every other token of disapprobation.

CHAP. XIV.

Johnstone's Irishism in excuse of Cooke—He is indisposed—Play's John, for Mrs. Litchfield's benefit—Marks of disapprobation—Addresses the audience—Brief Chronicle, for the summer of 1803*—Messrs. J. P. and C. Kemble, and Mrs. Siddons, join Covent Garden—Cooke's first appearance, Kitely—Cooke and Kemble, in Richard and Richmond—Cooke, Kemble, and Mrs Siddons in the tragedy of Douglass and the play of Pizarro—Cooke indisposed—His old complaint—plays Sciolto, &c—Banishment of Banquo's Ghost—Ghost supported—2d part of Henry 4th postponed—Cause—Journal—Cooke's benefit—Dinner with Godwin and Holcroft.*

ON this unfortunate night of Sir Archy M'Sarcasm, when Cooke's *indisposition* became so apparent that hisses had become fre-

quent, he walked up the stage, and was followed by Johnstone, who played Sir Calaghan. After a minute's pause, Johnstone came forward, and addressing the audience in full brogue, says:

"Ladies and Gentlemen—Mr. Cooke *says* he *can't spake*."

This laconic apology was received with roars of laughter, and the curtain dropped, as I have before mentioned, amidst the most violent tokens of disapprobation, levelled at Cooke.

The next day, as may be supposed, he was sick, and as we may be certain, applied his usual remedy: the consequence was further indisposition, and disappointment, by his not performing in a new piece, for which he was announced, called *The Harper's Daughter*.

At length he appeared, on Mrs. Litchfield's night, in the character of *King John*. He was saluted on his entrance with hisses, on which he begged leave to address the audience and their patient hearing. He said he could not affect to be ignorant of the cause of their disapprobation. He knew that he had failed to sustain a part, in a new play, which it had been announced he had undertaken, but this, he solemnly declared, was through no fault of his.

For twenty-four hours he had been confined to his bed, *by a violent disorder*. There were many things in the part which he admired, and he never was more anxious to come forward. Whatever acts of imprudence he might have committed, in this instance he felt that his conduct was unimpeachable. The applause he had received in that house, had made the deepest impression on his mind, and it should be his study to show himself not undeserving of public favour.

The audience were satisfied, and he proceeded to play the villain *John*, amidst thundering plaudits, and in his best manner.

He played King John again, on the third of June, and on the appointed night of June 10th, he played at Drury-Lane, for the first and only time, for the benefit of Mr. Cooper; acting Iago, to that gentleman's Othello. Nothing remarkable attended the representation, except the fact recorded in Mr. Cooke's chronicle relative to Mrs. Pope, whom he first played with in Dublin, when Miss Campion; that on this night that lady was taken ill while playing Desdemona, and was supported by him off the stage. She survived but a few days.

This was the last night of our hero's play-

ing in London, for the season 1802—3, and immediately after, before Covent Garden was shut, he went, according to Mr. Harris's permission, to his old friends, Ward and Bellamy, at Manchester, and Mr. Cooper went to Liverpool; so that their acquaintance was at that time but of a few weeks standing.

Mr. Tate Wilkinson is so well known among those who know any thing of theatres, and has been so frequently mentioned in this work, that I will insert a letter of this period from him to my hero, by which he appears to be near the last stage of debilitated old age.

"DEAR SIR,

"Shall you be at liberty Sat, previous to the 7th Sunday of Trinity, our assizes are the week following. Will favour me with your assistance that week, accept the Sat as a *clear* benefit, ensured 60*l.* and if it is a 100*l.* or more, you're to receive. I have been in a state of decline a long time, no food or good rest; nor over the threshold since October, but confined in great pain. Don't move with the company, but stay at home to be nursed. Am, dear Sir,

York, June 19, 1803. Yours, &c.

TATE WILKINSON.

Mr. Cooke, in his "chronicle," gives the following brief account of this summer's expedition. "As usual, Manchester, and AS USUAL. Afterwards Chester, and then for the first time, Cheltingham. I received more benefit from the air, and water, than from the theatre. I acted a few nights at Worcester, and then proceeded to Derby, Chesterfield, and Nottingham. The weather was fine, and the harvest good. I received every politeness and civility from Mr. and Mrs. Wrench, the principal proprietors. Two or three of the old members were remaining." Afterwards he says, "I have just recollected, I forgot to mention the pretty little town of Ludlow, in Shropshire, where I acted three or four nights, to a very genteel if not a numerous audience."

Mr. Kemble having returned from his tour on the continent, concluded a negociation with the proprietors of Covent Garden theatre, by which he became a proprietor, an actor, and the acting-manager of that house. A further consequence was, that Mrs. Siddons, his sister, and Mr. Charles Kemble, his brother, joined the company.

Our here, on his return to town from his summer tour, once more determined to keep

a diary. He opened the same volume, which contained the thirty days journal of September, 1802, and the one and a half days journal of February, 1803, and began:

"LONDON.

"*Suffolk-street, Charing-Cross, No*, 38, *Friday, Sept.* 23, 1803.

"Arose a quarter before seven."

This was certainly a good beginning, but unfortunately, the beginning and the end are one; and if it did not suggest more than "meets the eye," it would not be worth inserting.

I find a letter of about this date from Tony Le Brun. This humorous vagabond, having been introduced to the public by Riley, in his "Itinerant," and made by far the most entertaining character in his book, the name immediately excites interest; and my readers will be pleased to find, under Tony's own hand, what his situation was in 1803, and to see a specimen of his epistolary style. My opinion of the latter is so high, as to induce me to think that if Tony had written for the stage, he would have eclipsed most of his contemporary authors of the sock and buskin, not even excepting the immortal author of "Ladoiska."

"*Theatre Royal, Margate, Sept.* 14, 1803.

"DEAR SIR,

"I am well aware of the improper liberty I am taking, but hope your goodness will excuse it. I have always been so happy as to possess your esteem, and, upon that ground, hope you will not refuse my request, if you can with propriety grant it. It is in your power to do me most essential service, and as I have been thumped and buffetted about of late, by the rude hand of Miss Fortune, I wish some other hand to pluck me up by the shirt collar. Now, Sir, if you would condescend to perform for me here, on my benefit-night, that would effectually do the business. I am certain you will fill the house, and whatever part of the night's profit you shall please to take, I shall cheerfully give it, and be thankful to you for your kindness.

I am, dear Sir,

Most faithfully and sincerely,

Yours, ANTHONY LE BRUN,

Prompter.

"Be so obliging as to send me an answer, per return."

If poor Tony's shirt was at this time no better than that described by Riley, Mr. Cooke would have had a difficult task to have

given him a lift by the collar of it. Whether he made the attempt, or not, does not appear.

The only notice Mr. Cooke's chronicle takes of Mr. Kemble's joining Covent Garden theatre, is, "In September I returned to town, and the only particular occurrence I remember, was Mr. Kemble, Mr. C. Kemble, and Mrs. Siddons, of Drury Lane, coming to Covent Garden; the former as a proprietor, and acting manager. The plays of Shakspeare were got up, with care and cost, but did not produce altogether what many expected."

One might naturally suppose that the populace of London, would crowd night after night to see Shakspeare represented by Cooke, Kemble, and Siddons; that their expectation would be excited to the highest, and that the fulfilment would have ensured to the managers riches unprecedented. But it appears that this did not take place; and that the enlightened audiences of London reserved their rational expectation of delight from Shakspeare, until a child was announced as the supporter of his gigantic characters.—They neglected the guiding light of a constellation which pointed their way to the temple of taste, and ran after a will-o'the-wisp,

that left them in darkness, bespattered with shame and ridicule.

Covent Garden, this season, gained an immense accession of talents in the Kemble family, and lost Mr. and Mrs. H. Johnston, and the great representative of *poor Pat*, whether gentle or simple, commonly called Irish Johnstone.

Mr. Cooke made his first appearance in Kitely. He was greeted with a burst of long continued applause, which said distinctly, "we will not desert you."

The first record I find of Messrs. Cooke and Kemble playing together, is on the third of October; when the former played Richard and the latter Richmond. This was a proud night for our hero. The reiterated plaudits of the audience, testified their delight in his acting, and confirmed their former decision in his favour.

Three days after, the three great actors appeared in the same piece, Mr. Homes's tragedy of Douglas.

Mr. Cooke——Glenalvon,
Mr. Kemble——Old Norval,
Mrs. Siddons——Lady Randolph.

Here Mr. Cooke again stood proudly pre-

eminent over his rival; but both were eclipsed by the unrivalled Siddons.

On the 7th of October, the public attention was excited by bringing out Pizarro, for the first time at Covent Garden, and the bills announced,

Pizarro——Mr. Cooke,
Rolla——Mr. Kemble,
Elvira——Mrs. Siddons.

But, alas! Mr. Cooke was *indisposed*.—He appeared, indeed, but only to render his shame more glaring. He was received with the usual testimonies of distinguished favour; but, as soon as he began to speak, his state was too evident. After a few ineffectual attempts to proceed, he made an effort to address the audience, and began—pressing his hand upon his chest, and making a lamentable face,

"Ladies and Gentlemen—my old complaint—my old complaint—"

This was irresistible—the laughter caught instantaneously through the house, and amidst roars, shouts, and hisses, he retired.

On the twentieth, however, Mr. Cooke was sufficiently recovered to second Mr. Kemble's Rolla, and Mrs. Siddons's Elvira, in the part of Pizarro, in which he of course could gain no reputation.

November the fifth, Mr. Cooke played Sciolto in the "Fair Penitent," for the first time, and on the nineteenth Mr. Kemble for the first time played Antonio, the merchant, in the "Merchant of Venice," to Mr. Cooke's Shylock. The next night Mr. Cooke played *Angelo*, to Mr. Kemble's *Duke*, in *Measure for Measure*. Mrs. Siddons in Portia and Isabel.

On the 12th of December, Mr. Cooke resigned Macbeth to Mr Kemble, and played Macduff. Mrs. Siddons in Lady Macbeth—the great, the *only* Lady Macbeth. This night is further remarkable for Mr. Kemble's experiment of dispensing with the appearance of Banquo's ghost. The audience were dissatisfied, and I think justly. Shakspeare is before us; and when we visit the theatre, we go to see Shakspeare with the accustomed and approved alterations, and not the mutilated Bard, lopped and disfigured by the player; whose highest honour should be to fill his great imaginings. Or, if alterations are deemed necessary, and I certainly do not mean to defend all that Shakspeare wrote, we have notice of it in the bills, and go as judges to approve, or condemn. The Poet meant the ghost of Banquo to appear to the audience

as much as the ghost of Hamlet's father, or the phantoms, mute or otherwise, which are shown in the witches' cave. Shakspeare wrote in conformity to popular superstition, perhaps believed in the reality of such apparitions himself; and we should lose much of the characteristic essence of our great and daring bard, if we should submit to have him pruned and lopped, at the pleasure of players or managers, who aspire to the honour of being commentators.

Among the plays of Shakspeare, revived this season by the introduction of Mr. Kemble in the joint character of proprietor and acting manager, was the *second part of Henry the Fourth*, a drama, which, though inferior in the representation to *the first part*, is resplendent with poetical beauties, and replete with humour and wit.

It was advertised for representation on the 9th of January, 1804, but was postponed on account of the indisposition of Mr. Cooke; and the next night for which he was announced as *Gloster* in the tragedy of *Jane Shore*, an apology was made for him, and the part played by Mr. Raymond.

At this time Cooke was undoubtedly ill, but it was illness caused by intoxication, and

consequent ill behaviour in the public room of a public house, which provoked a gentleman to knock him down.

By this time our hero's character had become pretty generally known; and when, in his cups, he indulged his romancing propensity, and fell into what appeared to be abuse, it was as generally unnoticed: but not always so, as the following anecdote will show.

Mr. Cooper, who had come up to London from Liverpool, had been in town but a short time, during which he had seen Cooke once or twice, when, one morning before he was out of bed, he received a note from Mr. Cooke to the following effect:

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I wish to see you immediately, on business of importance and secrecy. Come as soon as possible. G. F. COOKE,

Southampton-street, Strand."

Mr. Cooper sent word that he would come as soon as he had breakfasted.

He went, and found Cooke in bed. He drew aside the curtains, and exposing his battered visage, exclaimed, "See what a situation I am in!" His face, particularly one of his eyes, bore the mark of a violent blow. He was tolerably sober—more so than he com-

monly was after a night of excess. "I received this injury," he continued, "from a person bearing the character of a gentleman.—There is but one remedy! there is but one course to pursue! there is but one thing to be done!"

"Well, Sir, what is it?"

"What is it? Can you ask?"

"But the circumstances."

"A blow, Sir, a blow; what signify circumstances? There is no appeal but to arms. I have written a note, which I wish you to carry. Here it is," (putting it into his hand,) "to Mr. Johnson, an attorney, from Dublin, at the Shakspeare, Bow-street."

The challenge was in these words—"The bearer is my friend, Mr. Cooper, from America. He has my instructions, and will appoint the time, and place of our meeting, in consequence of the affair of last night."

"But, Sir," says Cooper, "it is necessary that I should know the story."

"My dear Sir, there is no story—I had a trifling dispute with Mr. Johnson, and—he knocked me down."

Cooper, upon his friend's serious representation of the unprovoked injury he had received, undertook his cause, and readily car-

ried his challenge to the Shakspeare, where he found Mr. Johnson, and delivered it in due form. Johnson read it, and then inquired of Cooper, if he was acquainted with the contents and the circumstances of the affair. Cooper tells him he is, repeats what he knows from Cooke,—concluding with Mr. Cooke's demand of satisfaction and request of an appointment. Johnson began to explain, but Cooper stopped him, observing, that he is there as Mr. Cooke's friend, and has adopted his state of the case; that if any explanation is made, it must be through Mr. Johnson's friend. Johnson mentioned Allingham the author, and made an appointment for meeting between that gentleman and Mr. Cooper at 12.

They accordingly met, and Cooper opened the business. Allingham asked him if he knew Mr. Cooke.

"Yes, I have known Mr. Cooke about a year, though not often in his company."

"Well, Sir, I do know him, and I know that he received no more than he deserved from Mr. Johnson; and Mr. Johnson shall not meet him. If you will hear the story, Sir, as I know it to be, well; if not, you must

be satisfied with this answer, Mr. Johnson shall not meet Mr. Cooke."

Cooper now asked him for the story.

"Mr. Johnson and Mr. Cooke were last night in public company together, and Mr. Johnson having made an assertion, Mr. Cooke, without any previous altercation, turned round and said, "you are a damned liar, Sir;" when Johnson, without any ceremony, knocked him down—Mr. Johnson would not have done this thing, but that the company was large and mixed, Mr. Cooke and Mr. Johnson unknown to the majority of them. Mr. Johnson is sorry for the necessity and for the injury done, but not sorry that he chastised Mr. Cooke's insolence. If you have any doubt as to the fact, you can be satisfied by applying to persons present. When you shall be satisfied as to the circumstances, you, Sir, will not interfere in the business; and I believe your present interference is owing to your not knowing Mr. Cooke's propensities."

Cooper finding himself engaged in an awkward affair, and that this answer is all that can be obtained to pacify the enraged man of valour, returns and reports all that had passed; adding, "I decline seeking further evidence, as Mr. Allingham is undoubtedly a gentleman."

"But," says Cooke "what's to be done?—to be sure I may be mistaken—but these marks—I may be wrong—But a blow!—I must be revenged!"

Cooper got off by saying, "you must apply to Allingham, and if you can make Johnson fight you, I will be your second, provided you can deny his statement."

This was the illness which prevented his playing Falstaff, in the "second part of Henry 4th," on the 9th January, 1804. On the night of the 17th he appeared for the first time in London, in this second Falstaff, and with a brilliancy, as an actor, which could almost make us forget the clouds which had just obscured the man.

During the confinement occasioned by this disgraceful tavern broil, the propensity to journalize again seized our unfortunate hero, and he begins on the page after that which contains *his last beginning*.

"LONDON.

"*Southampton-street, Strand, Tuesday, A. M. Jan.* 10, 1804.

"Engaged a young man as my servant, named John Grub."

"*Sunday, 15th.* Dined with Mrs. Hunn, and passed the evening."

"*Monday*, 16*th*. Dined with Mrs. H."

"*Monday*, 30*th*. Dined with Mrs. H. in company of Capt. Shortland, of the Dolphin; drank tea, played at cards, and passed the evening. Joined by Mrs. and Miss Shortland and Mrs. Thompson!"

And so ends this journal, which records two remarkable doings of G. F. Cooke—viz.—*drinking tea* and *playing at cards*. But the very next day he began another journal, in all due form.

"LONDON.

"*Southampton-street, Strand, No.* 34; *Tuesday, January* 31*st*, 1804.

"Arose a few minutes after 8. Read over the Morning Post; breakfasted, and looked over and arranged my letters, papers, &c. of every description; then wrote a short note to Mrs. Hunn. This occupied me till beyond half past one. Paid my washing bill; this is mentioned, as, at present, I do not keep regular accounts. Read over the part of Sir John Falstaff, in the 2d part of Henry 4th (the soliloquies twice.)" And the same day he ended.

On the twentieth of January, Mr. Cooke played Iago, in the tragedy of "Othello," to Mr. Kemble's Othello; Mrs. Siddons playing

Desdemona; and on the eighth of February the same constellation blazed in the tragedy of *King John*. Mr. Cooke played this night for the first time the character of Hubert, and is said to have given more effect to that part than it was ever known to have on the stage of the Metropolis.

Mr. Cooke in his "chronicle" says, "I took "Such Things Are!" for my own night. Why, I know not; it could neither be from *its* novelty, or *my* desire to appear in *Haswell*, but—such things are."

He might have added, that it could not have been selected by him from his admiration of the play or the authoress, for we shall find him writing as severe a philippic against Mrs. Inchbald and her plays, some time after this, as if he had had the same provocation which called forth the gall from the pen of George Colman the younger on this dramatical, critical, though not *remarkable* lady.

I cannot record the amount of his benefit this year, but I judge it was little or nothing; for next year he did not take a night, or, as it is termed, put up his name for a benefit.

We see him gradually losing favour with the public, and increasing those causes of dissatisfaction which deprived him of their fa-

vour. The actor is still as much admired, but the man is forfeiting his title to respect. The frequent disappointment in consequence of what was termed *indisposition*, reduces his consequence with the proprietors; and Kemble, in the meantime, by a cautious conduct, directly the reverse of Cooke's, re-assumes that paramount station in the public mind, from which his rival had hurled him by the mere force of genius, unassisted by riches, prudence, or study.

Mr. Cooper was, about this time, again on a visit to London; and his friends Godwin and Holcroft, who had neither of them seen Cooke in private, except at the intervention of Cooper, wished to meet and learn more of him. This was particularly the wish of Holcroft, who was the most of a theatrical man, and as may be remembered, was pleased with Cooke's vivacity and flattery, during the short time he saw him at his house, on the eventful day which obtained Mr. Harris's consent for his playing at Drury-Lane, and ended with his disgrace in Sir Archy, at Covent Garden.

It may appear strange to the reader, without explanation, that Holcroft, who has written so much for Covent Garden theatre, should not have previously met with Cooke;

but some time before Mr. Cooke's coming to London, Holcroft had been stigmatized as a republican, branded by the ministry as a traitor, and his works by their influence banished the stage; he therefore, at this period, was secluded from theatres, and actors, as much as if he had not been once a popular support to them.

Mr. Cooper, to meet the wishes of his two earliest friends, invited Messrs. Godwin, Holcroft, Cooke, Marshal, and some others, to dine at his lodgings. During the repast, conversation turned upon duelling, in consequence of the recent death of Lord Camelsford; and Holcroft, in reprobating the practice of this honourable murder, and in supporting the doctrines of truth and philosophy, with more of the *fortiter in re*, than the *suaviter in modo*, contradicted Cooper, Marshal, and others, in rather an abrupt and dictatorial manner. Cooke, who had been silent, as was generally the case, until he felt the influence of a few glasses, at length made some observations, which were met with the same spirit of contradiction, and the same abruptness of manner, which had characterised Holcroft in all his remarks. The veteran of the buskin did not sink before the repub'

dramatist, but with a bitter sarcastic look, and his sharpest tone of voice, after a short pause which gave double force to his thrust, cries; "Upon my honour, Mr. Holcroft, you shall have a patent for being paramount—" finishing however with a smile, which might in some measure soften the severity of the reproof. Holcroft was silenced.—Conversation on various topics occupied the company, in which Godwin, with his usual kindness of manner, and energetic eloquence, freely joined; but Holcroft remained mute. At length, awaking as from a dream of abstractedness, he replied to Cooke, after an interval of near half an hour, as if unconscious that any time had elapsed, in nearly these words:

"Your reproof, Mr. Cooke, must be just. I am thoroughly convinced from your words, and the mode in which you uttered them, that my manner must be rude, and irritating, and highly injurious to the cause, of which I would willingly be the advocate. I thank you, Sir, for correcting what I ought to have corrected myself. But I would willingly have you believe, that it is only an external appearance, arising from unhappy habit, which is offensive, and which is not a true index of my mind, at the time of speaking;

for I am convinced, upon a strict examination, that could you have read my mind, at the moment that my manner was most repulsive, you would have seen nothing but an honest zeal for truth; and *that* could not have been offensive to *you*."

This was cordially received, and harmony restored; but the irritable philosopher was hurt, and being obliged to keep a guard upon himself, as to the company generally, was, perhaps without intention, more than commonly abrupt and severe upon Cooper; this conduct drew from the latter the next day, a letter of remonstrance, which put an end to their intercourse, and they never saw each other more.

Holcroft, with a powerful mind, and principles of the strictest rectitude, was a slave through life to a temper, which not being early conquered, was his governor; and the cause of misery incalculable. He saw, and loved in William Godwin, the very reverse of himself in this respect. But all his own efforts, and even the example and precepts of Godwin, were not sufficient to correct the effect of an *early indulgence of temper*.

Notwithstanding occasional clouds of ill humour, the sun of conviviality cheered our party, till a pretty late hour of the nig'

Godwin was, as usual, the first to go away; having, as usual, taken a refreshing nap in his chair. Cooke, always a most loyal subject, a firm believer in the mysterious union of church and state, and a faithful devotee to the sacred and luminous house of Hanover, entered into a political dispute with Holcroft; and being by this time as well charged with liquor, as loyalty, gave the philosopher an opportunity of exercising his self-control, for he abused him without delicacy, or even decency. The party broke up, but Cooke staid till day-light, and was then conveyed home in a coach to Southampton-street.

CHAP. XV.

Mr. Cooke goes to Birmingham in the summer of 1804.—*Worcester—Hereford—Dublin—Londonderry—Belfast—Returns to London, September*, 1804—*Master Betty—Home's and Cumberland's opinions of the young Roscius—Cooke plays Glenalvon to his Douglas—Mr. Cooke takes no benefit night this season—Master Betty has four—John Bull cured of the Betty-mania.*

FOR the history of the interval until the re-opening of Covent Garden, I have little aid but "the Chronicle," and that is very meagre.

Mr. Cooke went immediately from London to Birmingham, and there played all his great characters, some of them twice, and Richard three times. He likewise played Rolla—I presume for his benefit, which yielded near 170 pounds.

He says, in his chronicle, "I commenced this summer's campaign (1804) at Birmingham. Afterwards went to Worcester, Hereford, (the birth-place of Garrick,) and then to Holy-Head, in my route, by the way of Dublin,

to Londonderry, in the northern part of Ireland; for which city and Belfast, I had during the winter made an engagement, for a certain number of nights, with one Atkins, who had been long strolling about that part of Ireland."

"After I had engaged for 300 guineas to act *three* weeks at Belfast, Atkins wrote to request I would come to Londonderry for *one* week, prior to commencing at Belfast, for which he would pay me 100 guineas. I arrived at Londonderry, on Sunday, the 5th of August, 1804, acted the week, and one night the week after." The chronicle goes on to state some differences in the settlement of accounts, which are altogether uninteresting; besides that the statement of one party in a dispute, however honest in intent, may be erroneous.

Mr. Cooke tells us that at this time he was ill, and had the attendance of two physicians and a surgeon. He says nothing of the nature or the cause of his malady; but adds, that on a settlement with Mr. Atkins he declined taking any acknowledgment of debt due from Atkins, because, "should any thing happen to me, not having any family, there

should not any thing be in my possession to appear against him."

Mr. Cooke returned to London by the way of Scotland, and played, on the first night of the opening of Covent Garden, Peregrine, in "John Bull."

On the 5th of October, he played Sir Pertinax, for the first time this season; on the 10th Sir Archy, and on the 15th Richard the Third. On this occasion he was said to have improved in his manner of giving the fifth act generally, and he then for the first time introduced the following lines from the text of Shakspeare,

> "Let's whip these stragglers o'er the seas again;
> Lash hence these overweening rags of France;
> These famish'd beggars, weary of their lives," &c.

On the 18th of October, Mr. Cooke played for the first time, *Strickland*, in the *Suspicious Husband*. This is a character of the same nature with *Kitely*, and would doubtless find in our hero a representative that must add much to the delight of an audience; but the part is not one to add reputation to such an actor as Cooke.

Mr. Cooke appears to have been very active and industrious in travelling and playing just at this time, for the Saturday before hi

playing Richard for the first time this season, as above mentioned, which was on Monday, he had performed Sir Pertinax at Brighton; and he returned to Brighton immediately after playing Richard at Covent Garden, and played it again on the evening of Tuesday at Brighton. He played several other of his characters about this period at Brighton, at the same time continuing his duty at Covent Garden on the nights appointed for his performance; but nothing new was offered to his abilities for their exertion, his talents as well as those of Kemble and Siddons, became of minor consideration. An engagement had been made with master Betty. As he approached the capital, the splendour of Cooke, Kemble, and Siddons, faded away; till on the first of December, 1804, they were lost in the Egyptian darkness with which fashion and folly enveloped the English dramatic world.

William-Henry-West Betty was born at Shrewsbury, September 13th, 1791. His father removing from Shropshire, engaged in business relating to the linen manufactory, near Ballynahinch, in the county of Down, Ireland. His father, his mother, and his sisters, were all fond of plays and players, and the female part of the family were accustom-

ed to recite scenes from their favourite pieces. Mrs. Betty was an accomplished speaker, and exercised her son from a very early period of his existence, in recitation from the best dramatic authors. Fuel was thus added to the passion for dramatic exhibitions, so common with youth, and that fire, which is usually smothered by parents, was, by his, excited to a blaze.

With these propensities, thus strengthened, Master Betty was taken, in the summer of 1802, being then near eleven years of age, to see Mrs. Siddons perform Elvira. This exhibition raised the flame of passion to madness, and the boy is said to have declared to his parents, that "he should certainly die if he must not be a player." This memorable saying, for which most children would have been deservedly rebuked, or whipt, was received as inspiration, and his father, perhaps conceiving hopes of that golden destiny which awaited him, sent for the manager of the Belfast theatre, Cooke's friend Atkins, to hear the young prodigy recite Elvira.

Atkins not being inspired, was rather dull in perceiving that "heaven presented intuitive precocity," which became so evident afterwards, and sent his prompter, for whose

judgment he had a deserved deference, that he might have his opinion. Mr. Hough was pleased with the boy, and communicated some instruction to him, and Master Betty told him "he was his guardian angel." Master Betty would learn when he became acquainted with theatres, that the prompter is the guardian angel of many a Roscius, as well as the scape goat.

Mr. Hough was soon after invited to pass some time at Mr. Betty's house, and give the boy instructions. Hough doubtless saw, if he was not told, Mr. Betty's scheme; and saw something better for himself, than being the guardian angel of Atkins's Irish actors. He entered into Mr. Betty's plans, and was desirous of bringing his pupil before the public: but Atkins had not had his eyes opened yet, and he hesitated about suffering him to appear at Belfast, until the assassination of Lord Kilwarden having created so deep a sensation as to prevent people from thinking of the theatre, he complied, and announced the tragedy of "Zara:"

"The part of Osman to be undertaken by a young gentleman, only eleven years of age."

This drew a crowd; the crowd applauded,

and wondered; other crowds succeeded; and the "wonder grew."

The Dublin manager wanting money as much as Cooke's friend Atkins, and hearing of this recipe for an empty treasury, engaged *the wonder* to play at Crow-street theatre, for nine nights. Mr. Hough was employed as Master Betty's constant tutor and attendant, and accordingly he accompanied the boy as his guardian angel, keeping *behind* the scenes of his pupil's glory, as much unthought of by the applauding mob, as the ingenious personage, who gives sound and motion to the hero of a puppet-show.

After playing nine nights at Dublin, he proceeded to Cork; Waterford; Londonderry; Glasgow; Edinburgh; Birmingham; Sheffield, and Liverpool; acting from eighteen to four nights at each of these places; acquiring confidence and skill under the tuition of Mr. Hough; his fame flying faster than he travelled, and echoed and re-echoed by the admirers of his talents, which were, doubtless, uncommon, and by parents blinded by their love of a darling child, and their love of wealth, friends who wished them success, a tutor who had embarked in the scheme, and managers, whose coffers were replenished by

the crowds which the fame of the wonder drew to their theatres. The boy, really possessing docility, beauty, grace and feeling, rapidly improved, thus stimulated and thus instructed: and though destitute of the very soul of good acting, as we have the testimony of one of the best dramatic critics of the day, Mr. Holcroft, who says "the grand mystery of the art of acting, that of continued discrimination, which few actors indeed thoroughly understand, he has yet to learn," he drew all public attention from the real actors of the time, and was alone the magnet of both the London theatres, and the theme of the writers whose principal attention is turned to the stage.

His attraction was shared by the managers of the two rival theatres of London; and when he ceased to play, having a severe cold, bulletins were published daily, giving the state of his health, as though the fate of Empires hung upon his cough!

The veteran dramatist *Home*, the author of "Douglas," saw Master Betty act the hero of his only successful play, and carried away by the popular enthusiasm, and with self-complacency sharing with the actor the intoxicating plaudits of the wonder-loving crowd,

he exclaimed, that "he had never seen the part played before;" but another veteran play writer, Cumberland, none of whose plays happened to have a hero to Master Betty's, or Mr. Hough's mind, exclaims:

"What encouragement doth this great enlightened nation hold forth to merit! what a consolatory reflection must it be to the superanuated yellow admirals of the stage, that when they shall arrive at second *childhood*, they may still have a chance to arrive at honours, second only to these! I declare I saw with surprise, a man who led about a bear to dance, for the edification of the public, lose all his popularity in the street where this exquisite young gentleman has his lodging; the people ran to see him at the window, and left this bear and the bear-leader in a solitude. I saw this exquisite young gentleman, whilst I paced the streets on foot, wafted to his morning's rehearsal in a vehicle, that to my vulgar optics seemed to wear upon its polished doors the ensign of a ducal crown; I looked to see if haply John Kemble were on the traces, or Cooke perchance behind the coach; I saw the lacquies at their post, but Glenalvon was not there; I found John Kemble sick at home—I said within myself—

"Oh! what a time have you chose out, brave Caius,
"To wear a 'kerchief! would you were not sick!"

"We shall have a second influx of the pigmies; they will pour upon us in multitudes innumerable as a shoal of sprats; and when at last we have nothing else but such small fry to feed on, an epidemic nausea will take place."

During the Betty-mania, Kemble and Mrs. Siddons very wisely withdrew. They had, very wisely, accumulated that which gives power, during the period of their attractions, and they refused to be made the play-mates of a child; but Cooke, improvident, imprudent, and poor, though he had possessed for years the purse of Fortunatus, was obliged to exhibit his sturdy frame by the side of a pigmy, and stoop to bully a boy.

He played Glenalvon to Master Betty's Young Norval, on the 4th of December, 1804.

When *the wonder*, who, at Covent Garden, was called Master Betty, was removed to Drury-Lane, and became the Young Roscius, Kemble and Cooke played at the first named theatre, to those who could not get into the other; to the unfortunates who were so wretched as to be forced to see Kemble's Hamlet or Cooke's Richard, instead of Mas-

ter Betty's Osman, in the sublime tragedy of "Barbarossa."

On the 16th of February, 1804, Mrs. Inchbald's play of "To marry or not to marry," was brought out at Covent Garden, and Mr. Cooke played Lavensforth, a secondary and disagreeable part, whose only effect would be to lower him, while Mr. Kemble played the hero of the piece.

On the twenty-second of May, Kemble and Cooke played Othello and Iago, while the *Young Roscius* sat in front of the Stage Box.

The Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, closed on the 17th of June, with entertainments for the benefit of the widow of Mr. Macklin. Both Cooke and Kemble played on this occasion.

I will here insert an extract from a letter written by Moody, the original major O'Flaherty, in 1806. After saying that he had seen Cooke play Shylock in 1794 at Buxton, and had without effect mentioned his merit in London, he proceeds,

"I am not happy enough to be at all acquainted with Mr. Cooke; but I heard an anecdote of him from the widow of the late Mr. Charles Macklin, that does high honour to his feelings.

"Mrs. Macklin is a lady of unblemished character, and was an affectionate wife; and a long knowledge of her worth induced the managers of Covent Garden theatre to give her a night, to which Mr. Cooke made a tender of his popularity. Elated with her good fortune, she mentioned it to some friends; when she was told he would deceive her, for to their knowledge he had a country engagement for *that* night. She waited on Mr. Cooke, who convinced her to the contrary; for he had put off that engagement for her's, *for which he acted*, and the night was very productive indeed."

Of this degrading season, our hero has in his "chronicle" only these words: "The season passed at Covent Garden. I did not take any night this season."

This same season, Master Betty had four crowded benefits. The amount of one of them, was 1200*l.* and the others probably near as much. John Bull was mad.

In certain diseases, where the disordered senses of the sufferer cause strange, monstrous, and unnatural imaginings, to fill the mind and pervert the reasoning; health has been sometimes restored, by falling in with the whim of the patient, or what is called

humouring him: as in the well-known story of the Hypocondriac, whose torment arose from having swallowed a cobbler and all his tools, and whose cure was perfected, by dragging a cobbler out of a tub, and persuading the patient that he had been relieved from his troublesome inmate, by a few grains of tartar emetic; for the strong sense of the ludicrous and absurd, produced by the real presence of the cobbler and his lap stone, caused immoderate laughter, and a restoration of perfect sanity.

So, happily for John Bull, certain empyrics started up, and by humouring his disease, without intending a remedy, cured him. These were the parents of some twenty or thirty *young wonders* or *infant prodigies*, under the title of Infant Billington, seven years old Roscius and Billington, Infant Columbine, Ormskirk Roscius, Young Orpheus, Infant Vestris, Infant Clown, Comic Roscius, Infant Degville, Infant Hercules, and Infant Candle-snuffer; with some half-dozen young Roscias, of whom Miss Mudie was the last. These miracles, through the eagerness of their parents, and the managers of the theatres, to catch money, were brought out in such swarms, to humour poor John's whim

that he saw the absurdity of his hypocondriacal notion, fell to laughing at the pigmy race, which he had before sworn were giants, and was cured of *that* madness ever after.

CHAP. XVI.

Mr. Cooke's summer business—His chronicle—His journal, commenced in September, 1805*—His remarks on Jane Shore—Every Man in his Humour—Mr. Cooke plays Lord Davenant, in the Mysterious Husband—His remarks on it—His remarks on John Bull—Plays Iachimo—Plays at Bath and Bristol, in April,* 1806*—Unfortunately stops at Marlbro'—His journal, began in May,* 1806*—Opinion of managers—Goes in June with Mr. Rock to Glasgow—Goes to Dublin—Returns to London in September—His journal, began in November,* 1806*—Sans pareil theatre—Olympic Pavilion—Visit from an author.*

MR. COOKE says, in his "chronicle," "I commenced my summer routine, (1805,) Birmingham; played two or three nights

at Stroud; then at Manchester, with the usual success, and three nights at Litchfield races." He played Rolla at Manchester, for his benefit. Cooke has sometimes said, that if he "could not take a liberty with his friends, who the devil could he take a liberty with;" and I think, for Cooke to play Rolla, was taking a liberty as great as he could take with his friends. "The next season passed at Covent Garden," says the "chronicle."

This is but a meagre account of twelve months of a man's life; but fortunately, after his summer excursion, my hero appears to have been more strongly stimulated to journalizing than usual, and to have been regular, and constant in his efforts. I will insert literally his journal of a large portion of 1805—6 and 7, which, though not his confessions, as I observed of a former, is a curious specimen, descriptive of his habits, and indicating his companions, his mode of life, of reading, and of thinking, better than could have been done without such a document, from any materials, however authentic. It likewise continues the chain of his theatrical history, and gives his opinion upon some plays and authors.

"Arrived in London at the Bath Hotel, for the winter, on Friday, Sept. the 27th, 1805." (The theatre opened on the 16th.)

"*Tuesday, Oct. 8th.* Made my first appearance this season, in *Richard IIId*, and met a most warm and flattering reception."

"*Thursday, Oct. 10th.* Played *Sir Archy M'Sarcasm.*"

"*Friday, Oct. 11th. Stukely.*

"*Saturday, Oct. 12th. Iago.*

"Between the 12th and 19th, *Iago*, and *Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant*. Monday, 21st, *Peregrine Rockdale*. Tuesday, 22d, *Sciolto*. From the last mentioned night, until the 26th of Nov. *from various causes*, I did not appear. On Tuesday, the 26th, I acted *Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant*, and was honoured with one of the most cordial receptions I ever experienced. On Thursday, 28th, *King Richard IIId*, and on Saturday, 30th, *Kitely*. The applause on the two last nights, equal to the first. This was the 57th night of the season."

"Commenced my lodgings at No. 33, King-street, Covent Garden, on Thursday, Nov. 18th, 1805, at 3*l.* per week."

"*Sunday, Dec. 1st.* Dined at Mr. John Brandon's, in Lincoln's Inn Square; Mr. and

Mrs. Cross, of Horndean, near Portsmouth, (and who formerly kept the Crown Inn at the latter place,) were of the party, a son of theirs, who, with two young men, were just returned from India, and an old gouty gentleman, whose name I have forgot—Drank tea and supped where I dined."

"*Monday*, 2*d*. Wrote to Mr. Harris, in consequence of some late events—MEM—Dined with Mr. Incledon—Mrs. Howelt—Mrs. I.'s mother present, who was to set out early the next morning for Bath."

"*Tuesday*, 3*d*. Acted Peregrine Rochdale."

"*Wednesday*, *4th*. Falstaff, (1st part of Henry 4th.")

"*Thursday*, *5th*. Orsino, (thanksgiving day, for the victory off TRAFALGAR.")

"*Saturday*, *7th*. Viewed the interior of the Freemason's tavern, Great Queen-street, Lincoln's Inn Fields—In the evening played Shylock."

"*Sunday*, 8*th*. Dined, drank tea, and supped with Mr. Davenport and family, at Chelsea, Messrs. Charnock and Church, with a French music master, of the company."

"*Tuesday*, 10*th*. Played Sir Archy M'Sarcasm."

"*Wednesday*, 11*th*. Falstaff, (2d part of Henry 4th.")

"*Friday*, 13*th*. Received from the theatre the play of "Cymbeline," to prepare for the part of Iachimo. Also received from Ipswich a new comedy, written by Mr. Gaisford, a surgeon of the horse artillery, entitled "The Friendship of the World," or "Man as he is." Mr. Irwin, surgeon of the 7th light dragoons, had written to me concerning it, and on the receipt of my answer, Mr. G. had sent it off. Acted Iago."

"*Saturday*, 14*th*. Read a part of Mr. G.'s comedy.—Destitute of every point of dramatic merit, and totally unfit for the stage—how blinded, either by ignorance or partiality, are some who pretend to dramatic judgment! In the evening read Mr. Cumberland's tragedy of "The Mysterious Husband." I brought the book from the theatre on Saturday evening, to prepare for Lord Davenant."

"*Monday*, 16*th*. Received a letter from Mr. Elgee, of Dublin, which I answered by return of post—played Richard. A clergyman, a total stranger, and a horse-dealer, &c. who was almost in the same predicament, paid me a visit at the unseasonable time of

between 11 and 12, and staid with me, drinking rum punch, until near two in the morning.—The *modesty* of some people!"

"*Tuesday*, 17*th*. Dined with Mr. Brandon. Breakfasted and supped at Mrs. Spencer's. Peregrine Rochdale."

"*Wednesday*, 18*th*. Dined and drank coffee, at Mrs. Spencer's."

"*Friday*, 20*th*. Pierre, (a new dress.")

"*Sunday*, 22*d*. Dined with Mr. and Mrs. Emery, jun.—his birth-day. Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson, Mr. Marshall, a painter, a young man whose name I have forgot, and Messrs. Farley and Criswell, of C. G. theatre, of the party; drank tea, supped, and passed the time pleasantly."

"*Wednesday*, 25*th*. Christmas-day—dined, drank tea, and spent the evening with Mr. John Brandon and family. His brother James; Mr. and Mrs. Cross and son; Mr. and Mrs. Fawkes, and one of the young seamen I met there before."

"*Thursday*, 26*th*. Orsino."

"*Monday*, 30*th*. Sir Pertinax."

"The clock of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, has just struck the last hour of the year 1805."

"*Wednesday morning January 1st*, 1806.

"Arose at eight, and began the new year by reading Dumont and Lord Davenant—at ten rehearsed the scenes of the former, and afterwards breakfasted at a Coffee house—looked over some periodical publications—received a visit from Mr. M. Browne, for an order for "Every Man in his Humour"—dined at the theatre, where I received a note from Miss Edmead, likewise for an order to the above mentioned play—acted Dumont; but partly from a cold, and partly from not liking the character, if the audience were pleased with it, I was not."

"The play of Jane Shore, has long been what is termed a favourite stock-piece, and probably will continue so. In the title page of some editions it is said to be "written in imitation of Shakspeare." I do not clearly comprehend this—Gloster and Hastings, are no doubt in some measure borrowed from him; but the dramatic construction is very different—Rowe's excellence did not lie certainly in dramatic poetry, nor has he adhered to faithful delineation of character, as his heroine was very different from his portrait of her. Although she did public penance, she

did not die for want in the streets—She was alive in the time of Sir Thomas More, who saw her, and has described her as old, with all the ravages of age, and in great penury. The author of the tragedy adhered to the popular ballad, more than to historical fact."

"Supped at another Coffee-house, much against my will; both that and the morning one my first appearance in them. Had nearly reached the end of this day's scrawl, when Covent Garden clock announced midnight."

Thursday Jan. 2d.

"Breakfasted at a Coffee-house; looked over a newspaper, went to the theatre, and read the part of Lord Davenant, and rehearsed the scenes of Sciolto with Calista. The part of Calista is intended for Tuesday next by a young lady of the name of Taylor, recommended, I am told, by Richard Cumberland, Esq.—Read over Kitely, and acted it in the evening—much incommoded by hoarseness—the house a good one."

"Every Man in his Humour," may be now said to be the only play of Ben Jonson's that keeps possession of the stage. "Volpone," has not been acted many years, and "The Alchymist" vanished with Garrick. Before

that gentleman left the stage, an alteration of "Eastward Ho," was produced at Drury Lane, but did not long exist—there is, I believe, an alteration of "Epicene," by the elder Colman.

"The comedy acted at C. G. last night" (Every Man in his Humour,) "is well written; the characters, the humour of some of whom is now obsolete, drawn with a masterly hand, and the plot well conducted, and naturally and happily brought to a conclusion. In some passages, the language is in some measure laboured; but it is correct, and by that mark Jonson's style may be designated. Some modern acting is as ill suited to old sterling plays, as modern dresses would be. To prove the characters just, we still have jealous husbands, bragging cowards, silly squires, trifling gentlemen, roguish servingmen, and merry magistrates; but we are sadly at a loss for dramatic painters, to portray them for public inspection."

"*Friday, Jan. 3d.*

"Went to the theatre at ten, and read Lord Davenant—looked over some newspapers; some Nos. of the "Monthly Mirror," and Lord Davenant. Staid at home all the even-

ing, and the latter part of it much indisposed. Sat till past one, attempting to read, and retired to bed very unwell."

"*Saturday, Jan. 4th.*

"Arose about one in the afternoon, something better, but still indisposed. Read over Lord Davenant. In the evening acted the part, and with considerable approbation. At my return home, read it over again to stamp it in the memory.

"This tragedy, the production of Mr. Cumberland, is written on the plan of Moore's tragedy of the Gamester. The characters are rather of a more elevated rank, but the story is domestic, and but too probably has been realized. The prose language of Cumberland in this play, does not equal Moore, but the conclusion, (something similar to the Gamester,) is dramatic and affecting. The introduction of what may be termed a comic character, in the person of Sir Edmund Travers, was a little hazardous, but it was fortunate for the author, that he had so excellent an original, as the late Mr. Yates—before bed-time read in the "Monthly Mirror."

"*Sunday, Jan. 5th.*

"At breakfast read a No. of the Mirror—

answered a letter of Miss Fielding's, received the day before. Dined with Mr. Davenport, and part of his family, at Chelsea; the musical Monsieur there; drank tea, and about ten at night, returned to town in company of Monsieur. Sat until three in the morning, before I retired to bed. Found a letter from Mr. Harris, requesting me to play Lord Avondale, on Tuesday next."

"*Monday, Jan. 6th.*

"Breakfasted in bed; did not arise until near four in the afternoon. I should have mentioned yesterday, that I visited Mr. Ledger, who is much indisposed. Called upon Mr. Brandon—was much pleased to hear the play to-morrow was changed to John Bull. Returned home, dined and supped at the same time. Read No. 122 of "The Mirror."

"*Tuesday, Jan. 7th.*

"Went to the theatre, but did not rehearse—afterwards to the news-shop; dined at the Swan tavern, alone; bought a seaman's narrative; acted Peregrine, in George Colman *the younger's* comedy of "John Bull."

"This play ranks among the best of Mr.

C.'s productions. It was first acted on the 5th of March, 1803. In several places, there are evident marks of haste, but the characters in general are well drawn, and so much superior to the flimsy stuff of the day, that the faults are hid or passed over. There are several strong improbabilities.—Job Thornbury, (John Bull,) rather treats the Justice, in the 5th act, with more rudeness than a man endowed with common understanding would venture upon. His presenting ten guineas to a stranger boy, when beginning trade with a slender stock, and Peregrine presenting him with ten thousand, after thinking he had lost his all, notwithstanding his view of the family estate, are, I fear, circumstances not to be paralleled in these times. This is drawing men as they ought to be, but not as they are, which is the true province of comedy. The play, notwithstanding its merit, possesses very few traits of originality, unless the rare generosity of Job and Peregrine may be accounted such. Blundering Irishmen, Yorkshire clowns, and *easy* girls, are by no means rare to be met with."

"*Wednesday, Jan. 8th.*

"A little after one o'clock, went to the

house inhabited by Mrs. St. Leger, at the bottom of Craven-street, and viewed the funeral procession, on the Thames, from Greenwich to Whitehall stairs, of the late Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson.

"Dined with Mrs. St. L. and several performers of Covent Garden theatre. In the evening went to the theatre, accompanied by a lady, and acted Glenalvon. Douglas by Master Betty. Douglas is the only play of Homes's that keeps possession of the stage. After the play, returned with the same lady in a coach, to where we dined; drank coffee, played at cards, supped, and did not get to bed till after four in the morning. Before I retired to rest, read "a poem on the death of Admiral Lord Nelson, with hints for erecting a national monument, &c. dedicated (by permission,) to Thomas Harris, Esq. by Thomas Marshall."

Thursday, Jan. 9th.

"Arose in the afternoon. Dined at new Slaughter's Coffee-house, St. Martin's lane, and afterwards adjourned to the old one.

"The funeral procession of the late Admiral Lord Nelson to St. Paul's, took place this afternoon, but I did not see it."

Friday, Jan. 10th.

"Called at the theatre; walked in St. James's park, with Mr. Browne. Dined, drank tea, supped, and played at cards, at No. 34, Leicester Square, and departed about one in the morning."

"*Saturday, Jan. 11th.*

"Arose in the afternoon. Dined at the Swan tavern, went to the theatre between nine and ten, and heard that Mr. Allingham's new comedy was damned. There are a damned set of writers at the present day. I should have mentioned on Thursday, that Covent Garden theatre was shut that evening."

"*Monday, Jan. 13th.* Richard.

"*Wednesday, Jan. 15th.* Pizarro.

"*Saturday, Jan. 18th.* Iachimo." (In "Cymbeline," a part not calculated to add to Mr. Cooke's credit.)

"*Monday, Jan. 20th.* Glenalvon.

"*Thursday, Jan. 23d.* Iachimo."

Nothing appears to have occurred out of the usual routine of my hero's theatrical occupations, and habitual loungings, until some

time in April, when I find this record in his *chronicle*.

"In the spring of 1806, I got permission to act at Bath and Bristol. I played thirteen nights, at twenty pounds a night, which was the sum I always received there, but the managers were so satisfied on this occasion, that they paid me three hundred pounds.

"I have acted twice *gratis* for the Bath fund. Since I came to London, I have taken stolen marches to Portsmouth, Brighton, Richmond, Windsor, and Salisbury, but in future I shall act otherwise."

At the abovementioned period, when he played thirteen nights at Bath and Bristol, he had liberty of absence from Mr. Harris, for three weeks, and was to have been back to attend to his duty at Covent Garden theatre, on the twenty-first of April. But he had behaved regularly and steadily for three weeks, and had received three hundred pounds, and then forgetting that he owed this to the indulgence of Mr. Harris, forgetting duty, and forgetting himself, he stopped at Marlbro', for nine days,——and when he returned to London, found that the nights had been assigned for the benefits, and of course no notice taken of him. He was afterwards told

that he might have Saturday, the 10th of May, but he declined it. "*Remember*," says he, on a separate piece of paper, "Sunday, the 20th of April, 1806, at Bath."

Soon after this public acting at Bath and Bristol, and private acting at Marlbrough, Mr. Cooke begins another Journal as follows:

No. 33 King-street, Covent Garden, Monday Morning, half past 1, May 12th, 1806.

"Arose between one and two. Walked till four. Wrote four letters; to Mr. Wrench at Bath; to Mr. Ward at Manchester; to Mr. M'Cready at Bolton le Moors, Lancashire, and to Mr. Rock at Edinburgh. Some time after six, lay down, until near eight. After breakfast read "Barbarian Cruelty," (a narrative of some wretched seamen, shipwrecked on the coast of Barbary, and made slaves from January, 1746, to December, 1750.) Dressed, went to the theatre. Visited the wardrobe. Settled an engagement with Mr. Lewis, for three weeks, at Liverpool, in part of the months of August and September ensuing. About two o'clock walked with Mr. and Mrs. Incledon to the city; called at several places; refreshed at Mr. Whittle's, in Fleet street, and Messrs. Birch's, in Cornhill; dined with Mr.

and Mrs. I. and Mr. Oldfield, at the London tavern. In the evening went with Mr. and Mrs. I. in a hackney coach to the theatre; drank tea in Mr. Brandon's parlour; lounged and chatted with various persons, and about ten went home, and shortly after went to bed."

"*Tuesday, May 13th.*

"Arose a few minutes before five; passed some time in writing; finished "Barbarian Cruelty," and read, (in the same book,) "A relation of the hardships endured by the crew of the Litchfield man of war, shipwrecked on the coast of Barbary, in the year 1758;" looked into the Annual Register, for 1801; after breakfast wrote to Mr. Gaisford, at Ipswich, and Mr. Moore, of the Dublin theatre; looked over a number of letters, and some accounts; went to the theatre; returned home, and found a note from Mr. Franklin; read in the Annual Register; after dinner went to Bond-street; saw Mr. Jones, proprietor of the Dublin theatre, and took leave of him; on my return drank tea; looked into Jeremy Collier's Attack on the Stage; supped, and went to bed some time after eleven; much indisposed afterwards, and obliged to ring a servant up."

"*Wednesday, May 14th.*

"Arose between six and seven; employed some time in putting my things to rights; answered a letter yesterday, relative to playing at Buxton.—The man who writes, in the name of a Mr. ———, who, I presume, is the manager, (and possibly cannot write,) asserts that the house holds 60*l.* This is a *lie*, but is quite consistent with managerical conduct. From the first theatre to the barn, (with the exception of only two, within my knowledge,) their intentions are the same, although, happily, there are many blockheads among them who cannot execute those intentions.—Received a visit from Mr. Hill, of C. G. T." (Covent Garden theatre;) "looked into the 2d vol. of the Annual Review; after dinner continued reading the Review; after tea remained in a thoughtful confused mood till ten, when I went to bed; before dinner glanced over *my own* character, in the 7th number of a paltry biographical publication, called "The Modern Plutarch"—some assertions true, others the reverse. The compiler places the characters rather whimsically I am placed between Dr. Samuel Parr and the late Duchess of Devonshire."

"*Thursday, May 15th.*

"Arose at 6; before and after breakfast read the 6th and 7th numbers of "The Modern Plutarch."—The first three numbers I have, but, except the life of Mr. Cherry, I do not recollect whether I read any other: the 4th and 5th numbers I have not yet seen.—Walked in St. James's Park, and many well-known places in and about Westminster. Pleasing melancholy, and various emotions were excited. I re-trod the ground I well knew near 35 years ago; but the friends—alas!—Dined at Storey's Gate Coffee-house; drank tea in the garden of the Sun tavern, Pimlico; sauntered again in the Park; saw the Queen, and some of the Princesses; met Mr. Parker, the riding-master; returned home—afterwards went to the theatre, visited the wardrobe; returned home, read in the 2d vol. of "Robinson Crusoe," supped, and went to bed before eleven."

"*Friday, May 16th.*

"Arose at eight; after breakfast walked in C. G. market; at eleven went to Mr. De Wilde, and sat and stood for a whole length figure of Sir Archy M'Sarcasm, which he is employed to draw for Mr. Cawthorn, the

bookseller. Upon leaving him, met Messrs. Croswell and Bartley; walked with them to Charing ✕, and then proceeded alone to St. James's Park; met Mr. Marshall; after a few minutes' chat, continued my walk, and went to Storey's Gate Coffee-house, dined, and looked over some newspapers of the day. On my return home bought the European Magazine for last month; drank tea at home looked over the Magazine, and after a slight supper, went to bed about half past nine."

"*Saturday, May 17th.*

"Arose at nine; before, at, and after breakfast, read from the Eur. Mag. Memoirs of the late James Barry, Esq. an eminent painter, who died in February last. In the evening played Sir Pertinax."

Thus ends this piece of Journal.

In the memoir which he calls his "chronicle," he observes, speaking of the present season, "I again did not take a night. I commenced the summer of 1806, at Glasgow."

I will here introduce a curious memorandum, expressive of his embarrassed situation at this time.

" *Wednesday, June 4th*, 1806.

" Engaged to play 10 nights at the Dublin theatre, to commence on, or near the 1st of July, 1806. To play a week at Birmingham, and the succeeding week at Sheffield, to commence on the 4th of August. To play 13 nights at Liverpool, to commence on, or near the 18th of August. Something like a treaty begun with Edinburgh, but nothing proposed on either side; the delay, however, rests with me, as Mr. R. *expects* to see or hear from me.

1. " How to keep the three first engagements, and what steps to take as to the last?"

2. " How to avoid contracting further debt in my present residence, and the speediest means of leaving it?"

3. " How, should Edinburgh prove impracticable, to make the most advantage of my time prior to reaching Ireland?"

4. " How to estimate my property, and how to bestow it?"

5. " How to answer Mr. Franklin's note of last Sunday?"

6. " How to come to some explanation and future determination respecting Covent Garden?"

7. "How to lay down a plan for the future, as far as foresight can enable me to judge?"

These Queries he thus answers.

1. "To be either at Shrewsbury or Chester on the twenty-second of this month, on the way to Holyhead, or to embark, prior to the 22d, either at Park Gate or Liverpool."

2. "By leaving it, at the latest, on Thursday morning, the 12th; and leaving all my property, but what is absolutely necessary, as security for my debt."

3. "There being but 22 days left, it does not seem practicable to make any advantage of the time, but it may be considered."

4. "Answered as far as possible by the second."

5. "By letting him know, this evening, that I shall be at Dublin, at least it is my intention, 2 or 3 days before the end of the month, and requesting to see him to-morrow."

6. "By writing to Mr. Harris, on or before the day of my departure, being very plain and explicit, and abiding by his determination."

7. "By returning to Covent Garden next season, if eligible and possible; if not, from the time I commence in Ireland, to endeavour to form engagements at Edinburgh, Bath, and Bristol, Manchester, &c. and for one year

from next September, and prior to the expiration of it, to apply for a situation at Drury-Lane. Industry and prudence must be the basis of my conduct."

Drury-Lane seems at length to have been suggested to Mr. Cooke's mind as the field on which to retrieve his declining fame. To a mind of common prudence it would have been suggested the moment John P. Kemble, Esq. became a proprietor and the acting manager of Covent Garden. There is no greater proof of the pre-eminent talents of Mr. Cooke, than the holding a place in public estimation against the concurring influence of his artful rival and his lamentable habits.

Of his journey to Glasgow, and the characters which he performed while there, he gives the following account in another manuscript.

"LONDON.

"*Wednesday, June 11th*, 1806.

"Left the Castle and Falcon in Aldersgate street, in a Manchester coach, about two in the afternoon, supped at Northampton, breakfasted early the next morning at Leicester, dined at Buxton, and arrived at Manchester early the same evening. Saw some old acquaintance, supped and slept at the Royal Inn.

"*Friday*, 13*th*. By laying too long in bed, missed the coach; left Manchester in a post-chaise, accompanied by Mr. Rock, with whom I left London. At Bolton overtook the coach, but was soon obliged to leave it by illness. Proceeded in a gig, and afterwards in a post-chaise to Preston, thence to Lancaster, where we dined, and in a coach set out for Kindal, where we supped and slept. Early on Saturday morning, the 14th, proceeded to Carlisle, where we dined and set out in the mail for Glasgow, which we reached next morning.

"Mr. Rock went home, and I breakfasted with a pleasant agreeable gentleman, the Rev. Mr. Sleath, one of the masters of Rugby School, in Warwickshire, whom we took up at Leicester, and who was on his journey to the Highlands of Scotland, to fish for trout. He gave me his address, with a hearty invitation to call on him at Rugby, and a small fishing tour of his and a companion in his piscatory expeditions. About nine we parted, and he set out in a Greenock conveyance.

"Early in the afternoon Mr. R. and his son came, and conducted me to a lodging in the same house (opposite the old theatre in Dunlop street) with him and Mrs. R. It was agreed that I should make one of the family during my stay.

"On Monday the 16th I went to the new Theatre Royal, and afterwards called on Mr. Jackson, who has been many years a manager in Scotland.

"The following eleven nights I acted in Glasgow.

Wednesday, June 18th, Richard 3d.
Thursday, 19th, Shylock and Sir Archy.
Friday, 20th, Falstaff. *(Merry Wives.)*
Saturday, 21st, Macbeth.
Monday, 23d, Iago and Sir Archy.
Tuesday, 24th, Sir Pertinax.
Wednesday, 25th, Richard 3d.
Thursday, 26th, Sir Giles Overreach.
Friday, 27th, Peregrine and Petruchio.
Saturday, 28th, Sir Pertinax.
Monday, 30th, Zanga. (my own night.)"

The amount of his benefit was 170*l.*

After leaving Glasgow he went to Dublin, for which place he says he "made an engagement with Mr. Jones during the winter." He then mentions his going "from Dublin to Liverpool, and (playing) one night at Litchfield, which closed the summer campaign."

From this excursion he arrived in London on Monday, the fifteenth of September, 1806, on which evening Covent Garden theatre was opened.

He made his first appearance this season on the 29th of September, in the part of Richard the Third.

Speaking of the performance of this evening, he observes, that he met with, "a universal, warm, and most flattering reception; nor did I ever receive more applause during the representation."

Nothing particular appears to have occurred to Mr. Cooke from this time until the 23d of November, during which period he was engaged in the usual routine of his profession, and played one new character of no worth, called "Prince of Altenburgh," in the play of "Adrian and Orrilla." On the last mentioned day he commenced another journal, during the continuance of which, his attention seems to have been a good deal devoted to the politics of the day. I therefore present it to the reader as a specimen, among other things, of Mr. Cooke's political opinions.

"*Sunday Nov.* 23*d*, 1806.

"Having breakfasted in bed, arose between nine and ten. Read in the first volume of "The Spectator." My dresser at the theatre, came and assisted me in putting my things in some order. Read again in "The Specta-

tor." About four went to the Wheat-sheaf Coffee-house, in the Strand, where I dined and drank coffee. A little while after seven, returned home and went early to bed."

"*Monday, Nov. 24th.*

"Awake before three in the morning, and continued so until I arose, between seven and eight. Examined my dressing-box. Walked by St. James's park, to Storey's Gate Coffee-house, where I breakfasted. Read the "Times" and the "Morning Post." The latter contained accounts of the almost total destruction of the Prussian army, which, I fear, has suffered as much from treachery, as from the superiority of the French. As for the new Emperor,

"How shall we treat this bold aspiring man?
"Success still follows him and backs his crimes!"

"I look upon the British empire to be in a very perilous situation.

"On my return home, after remaining some time in the park, read in the 2d. volume of the Spectator. One character struck me forcibly. These volumes are always new. Looked over "The Sunday Review." In the evening acted the Prince of Altenburgh in Mr. Dimond's (son of one the Bath managers,)

play of "Adrian and Orrilla" or, "A mother's Vengeance"—the house full. Supped at home, and went to bed some time after midnight."

"*Tuesday, Nov. 25th.*

"Arose between seven and eight. Set out to breakfast at Story's Gate, but a smart shower of rain made me take shelter in the coffee-room of the Golden-cross, Charing-cross. I called for breakfast. There was not a table immediately disengaged, and if I have made up my mind to ever so trifling a purpose, I very much dislike to have it baulked; so seeing a decent dressed female walk leisurely by, I thought I could endure the rain as well as she could, and accordingly I set out for Story's Gate—while there, read the "Morning Post," and "The Times." On my return home I met a gentleman in Long-Acre, who had just left his card at my lodgings; he turned back with me, and remained in conversation some time—at his departure I sauntered to the theatre, and then took a circuitous walk to Story's Gate, to dinner. My mind was not at all set on dining there; but at my last two breakfasts, I had not given the waiter a fee, and he being a very civil young fellow, I went there more on

his acount than on my own. Read the Courier.

" After coffee, went to see an elegant new theatre in the Strand. A tier of boxes go round the interior, and underneath is a very commodious pit. There is not any gallery—the decorations and embellishments are handsome, and well fancied—I know not if it was built for any particular purpose; but, at present it is open under the title of *Sans Pareil*, and the entertainments divided into three parts—the first, " The Rout," consisting of recitation and singing; written, composed, spoken, sung, and accompanied by a young lady, who never appeared on any other stage. The second, an optical exhibition, in the manner of the Phantasmagoria; and the third much the same as the second, concluding with an artificial fire-work—the second and third parts of the entertainment are very pleasing.

" Met with Mr. Astley, Jun. and Mrs. Astley. Went home, drank some porter, and retired to bed between eleven and twelve."

[" *Wednesday, Nov. 26th.*

" Arose between seven and eight. Read in the Spectator. Another character forcibly

struck me—Breakfasted—Read again. Early in the afternoon a medical gentleman called on me, in consequence of a note I had dispatched to him in the morning. I have for some time been severely pained with a rheumatic affection in my right arm. Dined about three, and slumbered away the time, (a truly November day) till I went to the theatre. Acted Altenburgh; returned home, and immediately went to bed. My dresser at the theatre embrocated my arm; I afterwards took some gruel, and passed a painful night."

"*Thursday, Nov. 27th.*

"After embrocation, arose and breakfasted before ten. Read in the Spectator, and received a just impression from another character. These volumes will never be laid aside, even by a common thinking mind, but occasionally perused during life—looked over a dialogue between a painter and a cheesemonger (with thoughts upon it) relative to the mode of numbering houses. After dinner looked over an account of the asylum for orphan girls in the parish of Lambeth—an account of the nature and views of the Philanthropic Society, instituted in the year 1788. Hastily ran through "The Pleasures of Me-

mory, a poem, in two parts," with notes—the author retained in *his* memory Dr. Goldsmith —supped between ten and eleven, and went to bed at midnight."

" *Friday, Nov. 26th.*

" Breakfasted in bed, after passing a very painful and restless night. Was visited by my medical attendant. Arose some time after three—on coming down found a note from a stage-struck hero, who formerly troubled me. Dined, and between five and six went to the theatre and acted Count Altenburgh. Returned home, had my arm embrocated, supped on gruel, and went to bed between eleven and twelve."

" *Saturday, Nov. 27th.*

" After a tolerable night, arose at eight. Made some adjustments, and breakfasted at Story's Gate—a young *private* actor, who made his first *public* appearance in Pierre, at Drury Lane on Thursday last, was taught the difference between the partial approbation of friends, and the impartial decision of the public. Went to the theatre and received my salary—answered the theatrical note I received yesterday, and received one from Mr. Lewis, in answer to one I sent him last week

—looked into "Salmon's Geographical Grammar,"—dined at Story's Gate about five—On my way there met two men from Chester—read the Courier."

Speaking of Hamburgh being taken possession of by the French, he says, "I am neither a politician nor a man of business; but it appears plainly to me, from the strides the usurper has been taking, that Hamburgh was not the least warranted in supposing itself in safety. What safety could be expected from a tyrant in power, regardless of every law human or divine, a violater of treaties, and the disturber of Europe?

"I cannot suppose, from the state of Germany for some months past, that the exports to Hamburgh from this country have been very considerable; but, surely, the property there might have been placed in safety—Why not in British vessels of force? But a universal torpor seems to have prevailed. From the hurried anxiety of placing their friends in offices of emolument and authority, and from the bustle of the general election, ministers seem not to have had leisure to attend to the *less weighty* affairs of the nation.

"While at the Coffee-house, I read Mr. Cumberland's comedy of "The Jew," which

I think I never did before; nor did I ever see it entirely acted. Cumberland's muse is a philanthropic one, and painted men as they should be, rather than as what they are; yet Sheva is highly overcoloured. A man of immense wealth, *starving* himself to do good to others, is improbable. After coffee went to the theatre, and sat in my dressing-room until the play was over, then went to the front to see "The Deserts of Arabia," one of those strange after-pieces that have been lately introduced; some splendid scenery, elegant and appropriate dresses, with pleasing music—but for the rest——; at the conclusion returned home, and went to bed at midnight. In the boxes saw Mr. and Mrs. Galindo."

"*Sunday, November* 30*th.*

"Arose at eight; breakfasted between nine and ten; looked into Parnell's works; visited by Mr. Hewson, my medical attendant, who sat conversing with me for some time; read *The News*, and *Bell's Weekly Messenger*—all the papers full of the disastrous affairs on the continent: yet sometimes out of evil springs good. Every humane and feeling mind must rejoice, (no matter by what

means,) at the prospect of the monarchy and independence of Poland being again restored, which was shamefully ravished from them by Austria, Russia, and Prussia.

"The supreme Disposer of all events can, by the most flagitious of mankind, show his mercy and justice, as well as his displeasure.

"Dined about four; read in the Geographical Grammar; supped about ten; read again in the Grammar, and went to bed between eleven and twelve."

"*Monday, December* 1*st.*

"Arose between seven and eight; looked over some papers in my desk; breakfasted at Story's Gate; read the Morning Post and the Times; went to the theatre—on my return bought a walking-stick, and "A Tour up the Streights, from Gibraltar to Constantinople," by Capt. Sutherland, of the 25th regiment of foot: it is written in the form of a journal, and commences August 14th, 1787—Read some papers, and then went to dinner at the Wheat-sheaf Coffee-house; looked into the Globe newspaper—from thence went to the *Olympic Pavilion*, a new wooden building erected in Newcastle-street, in the Strand, by the celebrated Philip Astley: it is circular,

the roof, with a small dome, is composed of sheets of tin, and is supported by pillars.—From the centre of the top, a circular lustre of cut glass, consisting of twelve separate parts, each containing four lamps, has a very pleasing appearance. The stage is on a level with the area for horsemanship, and the orchestra rather strangely disposed up stairs, on the left of the stage. A tier of boxes go entirely round the house, with the exception of the orchestra: the pit is underneath and behind it, a small space between, is the gallery. The scenery is well painted, and the dresses are appropriate. The performances, feats on the slack-rope and dancing, were well executed; but the concluding piece, which should be the best, was the most absurd, tedious, disagreeable piece of mummery, I ever witnessed. It was only displeasure that kept me from falling asleep. Mr. Parker, who, I presume, has some concern in the undertaking, came to me in the boxes, and requested my acceptance of the freedom of the house for myself and friend, as Mr. Smith the equestrian had done before.—Returned home, supped in my bed-chamber, read in "The Tour," and went to repose some time after midnight."

"*Tuesday, December 2d.*

"Arose at eight; read in "The Tour," before, at, and after breakfast; about eleven went to Mr. Drummond's, the portrait painter, in Church-street, Soho, and sat about an hour and an half, to enable him to finish a portrait of me, for Mr. Luke Birch, in Cornhill, which was begun last year. Mr. D. called on me yesterday for that purpose.—Called at home, and then went to the theatre—walked a little with Mr. Murray, returned home, and read in the Tour—dined about three; read in the Tour, and between five and six went to the theatre. Acted Altenburgh. In my dressing-room received a package from Mrs. Wells, formerly of Covent Garden theatre, accompanied with a note, requesting my subscription to the publication of her life. The money required, was *only* one guinea. A list of subscribers was sent, which I think was the same I received three or four years ago.—Returned home, supped, read in the Tour, and went to bed some time after midnight. Visited in the afternoon, by Mr. Hewson."

" *Wednesday, Dec. 3d.*

" Arose at eight—breakfasted between nine and ten—called at the theatre, and then went to 6 Hunter-street, to call on Mr. Galindo, who had left his card on Monday last. He was gone to breakfast with Mrs. Siddons. From Brunswick-Square, went to Cornhill; saw Mr. L. Birch and his brother, as also a portrait of the former, by Mr Drummond—while at Mr. B.'s, Mr. D. called, and soon after went, and returned with my portrait finished, which is admitted to be a striking likeness. A former one, painted by another artist, was taken from its frame, and Mr. D.'s substituted, and hung up in its place—gave my consent to have it copied, and an engraving to be made for the European Magazine, at the desire of Mr. Aspirne, the publisher.—After refreshment took leave, and returned to the theatre—on my way thither, purchased " Moore's Almanack improved, for 1807," " Slave of Passion," and Voltaire's " Candide;" from the theatre, went home, accompanied by Mr. Criswell. Mr. C. sat a few minutes in my apartment, during which I wrote him an order for the evening. Dined at Story's Gate; read the Morning Post, and the Times, and looked over some of yes-

terday's papers. Went through a private door, into an upper box, at the theatre, and saw the tragedy of Coriolanus acted—for obvious reasons, I shall seldom make any remarks on the plays of Shakspeare. The adherence to the Roman history, may, in some places, have curbed the sublime genius of the author. It has been *got up*, (in the theatrical phrase,) with great and critical attention. On my return home, called at Johnston's in Bow-street, and bought some fruit. Read in the Tour; supped, read again, and went to bed at midnight."

"*Thursday, Dec. 4th.*

"Arose some time after nine. During breakfast, read in the Tour, and afterwards finished it. (I forgot to write yesterday, I purchased Capt. Hunter's "Historical Journal, of the Voyages to New South Wales;" a 4to vol. with an engraved portrait of the Capt.) At the theatre, a little of the usual morning chit-chat—took a turn in St. James's Park and Pimlico. Returning home, met Mr. Broster, Jun. of Chester.—Bought in Exeter Change, "The Man of Pleasure," and, "The Life of a Lady of Pleasure;" 2 small vols. Mr. Galindo left his card this

morning—read in the Man of Pleasure—dined, and again read in the aforementioned book. Capt. Sutherland's Tour is written in an easy, familiar manner, the language plain, sometimes a little ungrammatical. He has not been an inattentive observer. The Turks seem to be a favourite people with him. He is the first writer I have met with, who affects to believe Mahomet was an honest man, and that he acted from pure and upright motives, when he formed his new religion. The moral part of the Alcoran, is calculated for the country he lived in, and in many particulars is unexceptionable; but for his divine mission, the best that can be said of it, if we acquit him of wicked intentions, is, that it is the enthusiastic imaginations of a madman; and yet there is not any part of his military or legislative character, that sanctions the belief that he was in that predicament. The Capt. in recording the battle of Marathon, and adverting to the disposition of Miltiades and his opponents, forces a smile, when he makes use of modern terms, such as the Persians advancing *en Potence*, &c. but he was writing to Lord Heathfield, and as *Darby* says in the *Poor Soldier*, he had a mind to let his lordship see that he did not go to school for nothing.

"After dinner, read in "The Man of Pleasure." About dusk was waited on by a gentleman, whose name I have forgot, who introduced himself to me as a tragic author. His play, I find, has been twice rejected at Covent Garden, but he hoped, that through my influence, it might be brought forward. I endeavoured to undeceive him in that point; however, I fixed on Monday next at eleven, to hear him read his play, but, from what occurred at the theatre during the evening, I am afraid I shall be under the necessity of disappointing him.—After I was dressed, finished the Man of Pleasure. When I speak of its counterpart, it shall also be remembered. Acted Altenburgh for the ninth, and I hope, last time. Drank some Madeira at the theatre. Supped at the Wheat-sheaf Coffee-house, and went home at half past eleven. At what time after midnight I went to bed, I know not, as I fell asleep at the fire-side."

"*Friday, Dec. 5th.*

"Arose before eight—breakfasted at Story's Gate. Looked over the Morning Post, the Times, and the Morning Advertiser. Read in the life of a Lady of Pleasure—called at home, and at the theatre. Having ne-

ver seen the Royalty theatre, determined this day should be devoted to that purpose. Passed along Cheap-side, Lombard-street, Fenchurch-street, and down the Minories, until I arrived at Tower-hill, and afterwards by a circuitous rout, found myself in Wellclose-Square—I more than encompassed it. I saw a poor woman with grey locks, but whose face did not quite correspond with them, stoop down, pick up two or three small crumbs of bread, and put them into her mouth. I called her back, gave her a trifle, and was angry with myself afterwards, that it was not more. I feel assured that she was not an imposter. I looked about in vain, in the neighbourhood, for a decent house where I might dine—I then found my way to Wapping, and past for the first time, the West India new docks and ware-houses. The latter are an immense building, and the whole premises occupy a large space. Weary and tired, I at length found the Blacksmith's Arms tavern and Coffee-house, near Miller's wharf, the place of inquiry for the masters of the Leith and Berwick smacks, and luckily arrived in time to partake of a warm edgebone of beef. After dining, and looking at some newspapers, inquired my way to Wellclose

Square, but, it being yet early, went into a pastry cook's shop, and being almost at a loss what to ask for, bought something more than a pound of plum cake, and eat two jellies. Quitting the shop, I sauntered about, went into a public house, called for a pint of porter, which I just tasted, and found the tap room in which I was sitting was frequented by thieves, as the landlady said she was obliged to remove the fire-side furniture, and that the lead of the clock had been recently stolen. The doors of the theatre still remaining closed, I went to another tap, opposite to it. There were two foreign sailors smoking, and two or three other foreigners, I believe Germans —it seemed a foreign house. I here called for a glass of brandy and water, which I never tasted. At length I crossed the street, and as I reached the box door, Mr. John Astley had just got out of a hackney coach. I entered the house with him. He gave orders at the office, to admit me and my friends, whenever I presented myself—I went with him to the upper boxes, the first tier I mean, for there is a row on each side, above, I believe shut up. The theatre is very plain, but neat; the house seemed to me something larger than the Hay-market; the pit is small,

but I was told, the middle gallery would contain a thousand people. I went down stairs, drank two dishes of coffee in the coffee-room, and seated myself in the second row of one of the front boxes. Among other company, was a very civil Jew family; (there seemed many of them in the house,) I presented an orange to each of the two children, and received a piece of an apple from the mistress of the family. Mr. Astley came into the box, as did Mr. Upton, (who is, I believe, the poet of the theatre,) and a young man, a relation of Mr. A.'s. The performance consisted of singing, dancing, and pantomimic exhibitions, in one of which Mrs. Astley performed. At the conclusion, I returned by Rosemary lane, and re-trod the streets I had passed in the morning, and arrived at King-street, about half past eleven. Supped, and afterwards finished the life of a Lady of Pleasure. I have not had so long a pavement walk for some time; I wish I could add that it had been a pleasant one.

"The two last small volumes I have mentioned, from their size and contents, are very liable to be purchased by youth of both sexes. An artful introduction, and the name of a supposed clergyman or physician, in the title

page, would lead to a belief that they are intended for the purpose they avow, to warn the juvenile part of mankind from the paths of vice and seduction, but the contrary is the truth. Went to bed at two in the morning —this day's journal is written at Story's Gate."

CHAP. XVII.

Journal concluded—Visit to Woolwich—A monied author—Mr. Murray—Dryden, Davenant, and Kemble's alteration of the Tempest.

"*Saturday, December 6th.*

"Arose at eight. Breakfasted at Story's Gate. Read the Times, Morning Advertiser, and Morning Post—looked over, and read some part of "Moore's Almanack improved." Called at home. Stopped some time at the top of Fleet-market to view a stoppage of coaches, carts, &c. &c. which might have given a raw countryman some idea of the hurry and bustle of this great metropolis,—Met Mr. Liston, who introduced me to Mr.

Theodore Hook, author of a new *melo-drama*, called "Tekeli," now performing at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. Bought a history of the rebellion in 1745 and 1746, by James Ray, of White-Haven, a volunteer under the Duke of Cumberland—took a turn in the temple and White-Friars, which recalled some long past transactions—took a sauntering round-about walk to Story's Gate, where I dined and ran through, "The Slave of Passion," which I found to be a second volume. Looked over the Courier—went to the theatre, received my salary, and paid Mr. Ledger on account of the fund, 1*l.* 4*s.* for twenty-four nights—chatted some time in the little green room; went home, supped, read in Capt. Hunter's voyage to Botany Bay, and went to bed at two o'clock."

"*Sunday, Dec. 7th.*

"Breakfasted in bed, arose at ten. When I came home last night, found a note from Mr. I. Gomperts, (the author who called on me on Thursday,) signifying his intention of calling to-morrow, at eleven—wrote him an answer, addressed to 16 Finsbury Square, appointing to receive him on Tuesday next.—Read Bell's Weekly Messenger—my dresser.

called, brushed my clothes, and embrocated my arm. Read Mr. Ray's (of White-Haven,) history of the rebellion, in 1745 and 1746—dined by five o'clock, drank tea at eight, and sometime after nine finished Mr. Ray's history—the writer did not possess much elegance of style or delicacy of expression. A part of his narrative seems to have been copied from the public papers, but we must suppose him to have exactly related what he saw himself. All ranks seemed to press forward to support the monarch on the throne, and to use our author's own words, "The stage players were not wanting in their contribution towards the soldiers: (a subscription being opened for them,) the whole amount of three nights acting the *Beggar's Opera*, proposed by Mrs. *Cibber*, who acted *Polly* gratis, making 600*l.* was on the 10th of *December*, paid into the chamber of *London*, by Mr. *Rich*, for the encouragement of the soldiers: every comedian played gratis, and tallow chandlers gave the candles."

"The rebellion Mr. Ray narrates, was the last ill-concerted, and ill-executed attempt of the almost now extinct house of Stuart; if Cardinal York is dead, it is entirely so. Although but sixty years since, a period trifling in history, such have been the astonishing

changes in the world, particularly in Europe, that the whole of the transactions our author has set down, seem trivial, and even the memory of the event has passed away like a dream—take a retrospect of the last thirty-two years! Read in Capt. Hunter's voyage; supped, read in Hunter, and went to bed a few minutes before one."

"*Monday, Dec. 8th.*

"Arose at eight. Breakfasted at nine. I had promised Mr. Beverley, of Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, to act a night for him at Woolwich, where he had a company at present stationed. A little after ten he called upon me, and about half past we set out together in a post-chaise, through Greenwhich and New Charleton. We alighted at Mr. Beverley's lodgings, near the theatre, and were received by Mrs. Beverley. A little after twelve I went to the theatre, and rehearsed Sir Pernax M'Sycophant—afterwards took a slight refreshment; and the day, which had been very wet, clearing up, I walked with Mr. B. to the Royal arsenal, formerly called the Warren. I was introduced to Mr. White, a gentleman belonging to the place, who very obligingly showed us as much as our short

stay would permit us to view. The arsenal covers a very large space of ground. There are several handsome buildings, and a large new store-house is now erecting, upon piles. Next to the river there is a long handsome wharf, and we saw many convicts with irons on, variously employed—they sleep on board hulks, are put in classes, and rewarded according to their behaviour. Their friends have access to them at stated times, and are allowed to furnish them with refreshments and necessaries. This being the birth-day of the Earl of Moira, the master, and several gentlemen of the establishment, were dining at the New London, and there was a military dinner at the barracks.

"Dined heartily at Mr. B.'s, and about six, went with Mrs. B. to the theatre—acted Sir Pertinax; the play was very perfect, and better acted than I have known it by much larger companies, and better actors. The audience genteel and numerous. Fifty pounds is the utmost which the house (which is a very neat one,) can contain: and Mr. B. told me the receipt was 47*l.* 16*s.* exclusive of some free people. The dinners and weather were also against it. As soon as I was undressed, Mr. B. and I set out on our return,

and arrived in King-street about half past eleven—found a letter from Finsbury Square, in answer to the one I sent yesterday—supped, read in Hunter, and went to bed at two o'clock."

"*Tuesday, December 9th.*

"Arose at nine; breakfasted. At eleven, Mr. I. Gompertz called, by appointment. From that time until it was nearly dark, he detained me with conversation, and reading his tragedy. The subject, the death of Octavia, (who gave name to the play,) and the marriage of Nero to Pompæia, by whose arts Octavia was murdered. Of the play I will not waste ink in making a remark. On his former visit he said something, (both his speaking and reading are extremely bad,) about my acceptance of thirty pounds to hear the play read, and when he had concluded, he took from his pocket-book two bank notes, one of which seemed to be a 20*l.* and tendered them to me—they were immediately refused. Who, or what he is, I know not, but what I have set down will appear more remarkable when I add, that he lives in a trading part of the metropolis, and is descended from *Dutch* parents. I imagine he did me

the honour to suppose, that it was in my power to get his play presented to the public; whatever it might be, like most writers, he seems to entertain a high opinion of it himself. On my declining his present, he asked me if I gave instructions in the English language; I told him I did not, but, if he chose, would endeavour to be of service to him that way. He asked my terms; I had none; he thanked me, and we parted.

"About five, dined at Story's Gate, read in some newspapers, and returned home about eight. Read in Hunter, supped, and went to bed some time after midnight."

"*Wednesday, December 10th.*

"Arose some time after nine. Regulated some things, and breakfasted about ten. During breakfast read in Hunter, and revolved in my mind the business of the day. About noon, went to the theatre, and afterwards took a long and varied walk with Mr. Murray. We went first to Westminster, and viewed the new improvements now going on; then by way of Tothill-street, and Queen Square into St. James's Park. About three, we parted in Bedford-street, Covent Garden, and I went home. Murray is a pleasant,

well-informed, and entertaining companion, and "I love to cope him," in his ambulating humour. Near four, dined, and drank coffee at Story's Gate—looked into some newspapers—went into a box at the theatre, and sat about half the first, and the second act of the Tempest; first altered from Shakspeare, by Dryden, with the advice and approbation of Sir William Davenant, and now *revised* by Kemble. Dryden was certainly highly censurable for altering, and daring to meddle with a piece replete with the flashes of Shakspeare's genius; lowering the beautiful simplicity of Miranda, and adding his own unnatural and indecent characters of Hyppolito and Dorinda. Since the period when Garrick appeared, to the present, such a despicable piece of patch-work would have met with the reprobation and contempt it so justly merits. There were several marks of disapprobation, by a part of the audience, and more I am told, on Monday last, the first night of its revival. A Miss Meadows made her first appearance in Ariel. She is a good figure, sings the songs well, as I am informed, but is not sufficiently handsome and delicate for the aerial sprite—although young in years, she appeared to me to possess a great deal of the *old*

stager. Sat some time in the green-room, chatted with Incledon in our dressing-room, went home, supped, and went to bed, sometime after midnight."

"*Thursday, December 11th.*

"Breakfasted in bed, and arose at noon. Reading last night in Capt. Hunter, I found eight pages missing. When I buy from a book-stall, I must be more careful in future. Dined at home, and read in Hunter, until I went to the theatre; acted Shylock, I think well. The trial scene not quite so correct as I have witnessed it. Supped at home, and read in Hunter, 'till two o'clock. Found a letter at home from Mr. Beverley, offering me terms to play a night at Woolwich. Went to bed at the time I left off reading."

"*Friday, December 12th.*

"Arose at ten. I must observe, I last night saw the first act of a new farce, called "Arbitration, or Free and Easy."—Breakfasted at Story's Gate. Read the Times, Morning Post, and Morning Advertiser. In the Post, a paragraph of *theatrical blasphemy*. Rounded St. James's park, and afterwards took a long pavement walk. Bought the trial of

Henry Stanton, Esq. (an ensign in the 8th, or King's regiment of foot,) before a general court martial, held at Doncaster, in August, 1805. Called at home. Dined, and drank coffee at Story's Gate, where I went through Mr. Stanton's trial, of which I shall write to-morrow, and looked into the Courier—went to the theatre—chatted with Mr. Moreton, in the green-room; passed Mr. Rae into the front of the house; returned home, read in Hunter, supped, and went to bed at one o'clock.

"I found in the evening a polite note from Mr. Gompertz, requesting my acceptance of a dozen of claret, which accompanied the note."

"*Saturday, December 13th.*

"Arose at eight. Answered the note received from Mr. Gompertz. I was induced yesterday to purchase Mr. Stanton's trial, by "Singular and interesting," being inserted in the title-page—all the parties seem devoid of the character of gentlemen, (I mean, the military heroes,) and the singular and interesting business, mean and despicable. I never expended three shillings and sixpence in a bookseller's shop, with so much regret.

Finished Capt. Hunter—the volume contains the journals of Governor Philips, and Lieut. Ball, of the Supply, armed tender. The sufferings of the convicts both on the voyage, and afterwards, are painful to humanity; those of the soldiers, sailors, and even officers, not much better. From the distance of the settlements, I think they will never be useful to Britain, or ever worth the cost and trouble expended on them. Dined at Story's Gate. Returned home, then went to the theatre, and acted Altenburgh, for the 10th time. The audience thin. Mr. Beverley came to my dressing-room, and I agreed to act at Woolwich, on Wednesday next. Shylock and Sir Archy were the characters fixed on. Returned home, supped, and read in Voltaire's "Candide, or all for the best." Went to bed some time after midnight."

"*Sunday, December 14th.*

"Arose a little before ten; read in Candide, and afterwards breakfasted; finished Candide; took a list of books I mean to purchase; sat down, and, in the theatric phrase, cast twelve dramatic pieces, as I mean to take a night this season, for the first time these three years. In 1805, I was at home at Hampstead one night, by the sudden change

of a play, when I should have acted in John Bull; in 1806, having received permission from Mr. Harris to act three weeks at Bath and Bristol, I was not appointed to a night. I must add, that I should have returned on the 21st of April, but delayed nine days at Marlbro'. When I returned, I was told by Mr. Brandon, (on the evening of the first of May,) that I might have Saturday, the 10th of May, but I thought proper to decline it.—Dined, and drank coffee at Story's Gate; read the Courier of last night, and the Observer of to-day. After I got home, received a visit from Mr. Mudie, manager of the Windsor theatre; the purpose of which was to engage me to act a night or more at Windsor. He remained with me about two hours: I invited him to breakfast to-morrow, and then will give my answer. It is my present intention to act as often as I can, if to advantage, until next passion week, at any regular theatre within a proper distance.—Supped, read in Salmon's Geographical Grammar, and went to bed between twelve and one."

"*Monday, December 15th.*

"Arose some time after eight; dined at Mr. Incledon's, &c. &c. &c."

CHAP. XVIII.

Kitely, Jan. 7, 1807—Mr. Cooke staggered in Sir Pertinax—plays Prospero—Kemble's "Aitches"—Mr. Cooke at Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Berwick, August, 1807—Covent Garden opens without him—he is in confinement at Appleby—his chronicle—characters he had played in London up to this time—actors he had seen play.

FROM No. 33, King-street, Covent Garden, Mr. Cooke removed, on the 12th January, 1807, and commenced lodging at Mrs. Goffs', 27, Upper Eaton-street, Pimlico.

His Kitely, about this time, though so often witnessed, seemed to call forth in the public prints renewed tributes of praise. "It was, if possible, more energetic and richer than ever." His admirable acting in this part, which all agreed had not been seen before in its true colours since Garrick's death, procured him the trouble of playing Strictland, in the Suspicious Husband, a copy from Kitely, which could not add to his fame. Our hero appears to have continued repeating his established routine of characters, without any ad-

dition to the stock, or any incidental indisposition or visit from his old complaint, until April 16th, 1807. Those who visited the theatre when Mr. Cooke was announced, knew, long before this, that they must take their chance of entertainment. They might be delighted by the finest acting in the world, or the actor might be indisposed, and neither come to the house nor send an apology; or he might come, and be seized, while playing, with his old complaint, and retire amidst the sympathizing groans of his audience. On the above-mentioned evening he played his favourite Sir Pertinax, and manifested symptoms of being too much under French influence for a staunch supporter of the *meenister;* and it was observed, that Egerton's remark, "When a man is drunk, is that the time for business?" made him stagger, and the audience laugh immoderately. It has been remarked, that in his worst exhibitions of Sir Pertinax or Sir Archy, he never lost his dialect. One night in New-York, in Sir Archy, he forgot his name, and called himself Sir Pertinax. A man in the gallery called out, "Don't you know your own name? It's Sir Archy M'Sarcasm!" Cooke looked up at him, and replied, "Eet's aw ain blude."

On the 22d of April he played Macbeth, a character which he had resigned to Mr. Kemble, and now resumed on account of that gentleman's confinement with severe rheumatism. The same cause brought him forward on the fourth of May, in Prospero, in the Tempest.

The reader is perhaps acquainted with the controversy among the London periodical writers, arising from Mr. Kemble's pronunciation of the word "aches," in this line—

"Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar"—

which he converted into "*aitches;*" or, if he is not, I congratulate him.

Mr. Cooke, either to avoid giving offence to *King John*, as he sometimes called him, (and at others *Black Jack*,) by speaking English as English is now spoken, or to avoid those hisses which the audience always bestowed on Kemble, when he treated them with this unintelligible word, omitted the passage altogether.

Two impromptus appeared, which I shall transcribe.

"*Mr. Cooke's Soliloquy.*

"*Aitches* or *akes*, shall I speak both, or either?
If *akes*, I violate my Shakspeare measure—
If *aitches*, I shall give King Johnny pleasure:
I've hit upon't—by Jove, I'll utter neither."

The second has its point in the allusion to Mr. Kemble's rheumatism.

"*Query?*

"Pray is Kemble really ill?
One day demanded *Ned* of *Will.*
"Why yes," says Will, "'tis truly said,"
I heard his dismal groans
When he had *aitches* in his head;
They've now got in his bones."

On the twenty first of May, Mr. Cooke played Lear and Sir Archy for his Benefit. In his Chronicle he says of this season—

"Last season in London passed away, much as usual. I took for my night, King Lear and Love-a-la-Mode. I repeated Lear one night, but think, on both, I acted very bad."

Mr. Cooke proceeds in his Chronicle to give a brief account of his summer campaign, in 1807, in these words:

"My summer commenced at Glasgow, and was very productive; from thence to Edinburgh, and from thence to my old school town of Berwick upon Tweed, for six nights, for which I was to receive One hundred and eighty pounds. I struck off 55*l.* and received 90*l.* The remainder 35*l.* is still *owing*—I suppose, in the theatrical phrase, *to vex me.*"

Here it will be remarked that he speaks of Berwick as his "old school town," not as the place of his birth, as it has been called.

The last night of his playing at Berwick was on the 17th of August, 1807, for Mrs. Eyre's benefit; and from this time until December the 30th, he did not act on any stage, nor did he appear *in public* much during this interval.

The theatre, Covent Garden, opened on Monday, September the 14th, but without the aid of Mr. Cooke. The season passed on until the 10th of March, 1808, before his re-appearance upon the London boards. The London witlings tell us in their repositaries of fashionable sapience, that Cooke has entered on board a King's ship. This information is given, that the writer may add, "by this time he is *half seas over*." A most delectable pun, which is repeated again by the same writer, a true wit of the latest school, when some years after, Mr. Cooke embarked for America. In the meantime Mr. Kemble ventured to remind the audience of their favourite Iago, by attempting that character, but the decision of the public was against him.

The periodical publications of London placed Mr. Cooke in Appleby Jail at this time; and stated that his debts were such as left little hope of his liberation. "Should he die in this situation," asks the Mirror, "would it be

just to impute neglect of genius to the public?" and again, "To use the words of Lord Littleton, speaking of Goldsmith; a rigid obedience to the scripture command of "Take no thought for to-morrow," occasions the difficulties of his life, and threatens the insolvency of its end. Is the public to be blamed because common sense was not added to his other attainments? Surely not. If Pope had been a debauchee, he would have lived in a garret, and not enjoyed the attic elegance of his Villa on the banks of the Thames. If Sir Joshua Reynolds had been idle and drunken, he might have obtained nothing better than a scanty and precarious subsistence by painting coach-pannels and Birmingham tea-boards"—"and the inimitable Garrick, if he had possessed Shuter's character, would have acquired little more than Shuter's fame, and suffered Shuter's end. So much for Mr. Cooke! He has the reward which his own hands have laboured to prepare."

That Mr. Cooke was in Appleby during a large portion of the time from August 17th to December 30th, 1807, and in involuntary confinement, is sufficiently evident from the Journal which I shall lay before the reader, kept by him from some time in November,

or earlier, to the 20th of December, at which time it breaks suddenly off, and the date of the 18th has (7 W.) annexed to it, which I take to be the 7th week of his confinement. I say, "sometime in November, or earlier," for the commencement of the journal is missing, it beginning abruptly with a reference to No. 2—No 2 is not to be found.

It will appear astonishing to those who do not thoroughly know this extraordinary man, that he could have wasted the money which we know him to have received since he came to London in 1800; and that he could, though receiving great sums winter and summer, for the last seven years, be now reduced to such extremity of money and credit, that he is shut up for debt, immured for months, as the only probable resource of his creditors.

Besides his London salary, we see that he had two free benefits, amounting to near five hundred pounds each, or twenty two hundred and twenty two $\frac{22}{100}$ dollars; that he had great sums from the provincial managers, of which we may judge from the amount received by him at Bath and Bristol, usually 20*l.* or 89 dollars, per night, and in one instance 300*l.* for 13 nights, that is, thirteen hundred and thirty three $\frac{34}{100}$ dollars; many times making "sto-

len marches," as he calls them, and receiving great profit from the neighbouring towns, while his emoluments were going on in London; and the end of all this is incarceration at a country town, while his engagement is broken, and the business of the theatre to which he belongs is suffering. Yet Mr. Cooke never gamed. He was not vulnerable in that quarter. He knew and felt the value of money as much as any man, and was not disposed to give more than other men, except in the moments of mad intemperance; but these moments were so frequent as to account for the otherwise wonderful situation in which we now find him.

Of the extravagant profusion which marked his mad prodigality, the reader will have several opportunities of judging; I will mention one here as a case in point.

Having received the amount of a benefit and the proceeds of an engagement at Manchester, he pocketed the whole, three or four hundred pounds, and that evening fell into company at a public house with some republican manufacturers of the neighbourhood. The loyalty of our hero was always great, but increased in warmth thermometrically with his stomach and head. One of the mechan-

ies entered the field of political disputation with George Frederick, who soon became intemperate in words as well as conduct, and finally challenged his antagonist to determine the controversy by the fist. The man, who knew him and his reputation, endeavoured to avoid the necessity of beating him, and excused himself by "Nah now, Mr. Cooke, you know I would not harm you if I could; you take the liberty of abusing me and challenging me, because you are rich, and know I am a poor man."

"Do I?" says George, "I'll show you that. There, look," pulling all the bank notes from his pocket, "there—that's all I have in the world—there," putting them in the fire. "Now I am as poor as you are—now, damn you, come on!"

Such destruction of property, and gifts made in the moments of ebriety, as irrational and destructive, perhaps more pernicious, fully account for my hero's melancholy confinement in the fall and part of the winter of 1807.

This was a dolorous period for him, doubtless; but a salutary one, inasmuch as *it kept him out of mischief*, and assuredly mended his health. If the record of his life should here-

after be considered valuable, we owe it to this period of involuntary leisure. The chronicle, which is a retrospecctive view of his theatrical life, was begun and finished here; and though, alone, it would have been but a meagre and scanty memorial of him, it has served me as a clue to other and fuller materials. It has been quoted up to this period and serves as links connecting his different journals, and other matter collected from various sources. He brought it up to the time of which I am now speaking; but without having mentioned his present situation, or the causes of it, he breaks off at the 17th August, 1807. During this period of confinement, he likewise amused himself by keeping the copious journal of which I have spoken, which stops short without mentioning the causes which disenthralled him, and carried him to Glasgow; but we shall find them elsewhere.

At the end of his chronicle, he gives the following list of characters, which he had acted up to that time in London; and the characters he had seen acted by players of eminence.

"The following are the characters, as near as I can remember, that I *have* acted in London.

" Richard III; Lear; Macbeth; Hamlet; Iago; Iachimo; Hubert; The three Falstaffs; Jaques; Angelo; Prospero; Macduff; The Ghost; King John (altered;) Bajazet; Zanga; Sciolto; Shore; Glenalvon; Stukely; Pierre; (Coriolanus; at D. L.*) Lord Davenant; Pizarro; Kitely; Sir Giles Over-reach; Sir Pertinax M'Sychophant; Strickland; Major Oakley; Sir Philip Blandford; Mortimer; Haswell; Sir Archy M'Sarcasm; Comus; recited the Jubilee ode, by Garrick, and an epilogue to—(name forgot) by G. Colman the *younger*.

" Original characters," or characters of which he was the first or original actor.

" Peregrine; Orsino; Lord Avondale: Sandy M'Tab *(damned 1st night;)* Lavensforth; a part in a comedy of Mr. Holman's, *(name forgot; damned first night;)* Prince of Altenburgh."

This is a miserable list of originals indeed! He goes on:

" The following ACTORS I have seen, in the characters I have marked down.

* I do not understand this; unless he means, that Coriolanus was played by Mr. Kemble on the same night at Drury Lane, on which he played Pierre at Covent Garden.

GARRICK. Lear; Hamlet; Benedick; Leon; Don Felix; Kitely: Heard him speak an occasional address, after playing Felix for the Fund.

BARRY. Lear; Jaques; Evander; Sciolto; Old Norval; Orestes; Orillon; Lord Townly; Selim.

ROSS. Zamty; Sir Charles Easy.

SHERIDAN. King John; Cato.

MACKLIN. Shylock; Iago; Sir Archy M'Sarcasm.

LEE. Richard; Adam; Pinchwife; a character in a new tragedy *(name forgot,)* Heard him speak the prologue to "a romance of an hour."

REDDISH. Edgar (to Garrick's Lear;) Henry; Macduff; Shore; Orlando; Belville; Braganza

DIGGES. Wolsey; Caratach; a part in Albino *(name forgot.)*

HENDERSON. Macbeth; Hamlet; Shylock; Falstaff; a character in a new tragedy (name forgot) damned 3d night; Benedick.

WOODWARD. Touchstone; Lucio; Marplot; Trappanti; Col. Feignwell; Mercutio; Clodio; Tom; Young Philpot; (with the Epilogue between him and Shuter,) The Apprentice; Buck; Razor; Petruchio; Trapolin; Squire Groom.

KING. Lord Ogleby; Sir Anthony Absolute; Sir Peter Teazle; Capt. Bobadil, (Garrick Kitely;) Copper Captain, (Garrick Leon;) Lissardo, (Garrick Felix;) Old Groveby; General Savage; Sir Joseph Wittol; Archer; Sir John Restless; Marplot; Puff; Sir John Trotley; Glib; Sharp. The prologues I have heard him speak to Bon Ton, The Maid of the Oaks, and the School for Scandal.

YATES. Scrub; Fondlewife; Sir Oliver Surface; Major Oakley.

FOOTE. Bayes; Sir Paul Pliant; Aircastle; Devil upon two Sticks; Smirke, and Mrs. Cole; Major Sturgeon; Cadwallader; Hartop; Sir Thomas Lofty. I heard him speak the prologue to the Cozeners.

SHUTER. Launcelot; The Miser; Hardcastle; Sir Harry Sycamore; Don Manuel; Don Lewis; Sir Francis Gripe; Obadiah Prim; Cymberton; Sir Francis Wronghead; Old Philpot; Grub; Pamphlet; Justice Clack; Midas; Sir Hector Strangeways; Sir John Falstaff.

DUNSTALL. John Moody; Pompey; Randal; Soto; Quidnunc; Sir Jasper Wilding; Wingate; Tradelove; Sir Jealous Traffic.

EDWIN. Launcelot; Pollonius; Tipple.

WESTON. Torrington; Spy; Thomas.

PARSONS. Dogberry; Justice Clement; Sterling; Don Pedro; David; Crabtree; General Worry; Major Benbow; Davy; Lord Froth; Whittle, or Wittel; Varland; Skirmish."

He then mentions the characters in which he had seen Mrs. Yates, Mrs. Crawford, Miss Younge, &c. and concludes, "I make no doubt, but I have omitted several characters sustained by the justly remembered names I have set down, as memory cannot be solely trusted, for upwards of thirty years, and *not the smallest resource have I at present, to assist me;* but *all* I have set down, *I have witnessed.*

"I have had the felicity of often being present at the performances of Mrs. Abington, and Miss Pope, but the former is alive, and the latter, I hope, for the sake of natural acting, has not yet left the stage. I have seen some very respectable actors, and actresses, besides.

"The following, though within my recollection, I never was so fortunate as to view—Messrs. Mossop, Powell, Holland, and Ryder; Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Pritchard, and Mrs. Clive. Those I have *mentioned, I perfectly recollect.*

"As I do not understand the science of music, I shall only mention the singers I have seen, who could act. Messrs. Vernon, Webster, and Bannister. These added *the shirt* to the *ruffle*."

Thus ends Cooke's "chronicle." I now proceed to lay before the reader such part of the journal he kept during this confinement, as can be found. It serves further to develope his character, and shows him in a different situation, from those in which he was placed when he wrote his former diaries; he has no resources, but those he can muster within; for he appears to have seen no person, during all this period of (I believe,) seven weeks, except the woman who provides him food, a cabinet-maker, a pretty young lady, and once or twice, "Mine host of the Anvil," who may have been the keeper, as well as the maker, of the keys; of books he has no great choice; and his prineipal occupation seems to have been to record the present, and take a retrospect of the past—but no confessions; and whether with a view to amendment, we must judge by the sequel of the story.

END OF VOL. I.

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